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FOOTBALL FRENZY The three greatest gridiron games ever made!
Madden
Fever
2K3



Official Xbox Magazine

OVER 50 Xbox STUNNERS INCLUDING:
Lamborghini
Tony Hawk 4
Panzer Dragoon Orta
Wolverine's Revenge
Shenmue 2
BC

Online Unleashed!

Find out what YOU will be playing!

Xbox Debut

Metal Gear Solid 2 Substance

20 New Screenshots

Ninjas & Babes

Ninja Gaiden is back and DOA Xtreme Volleyball takes to the beach!



August 2002 Issue #9
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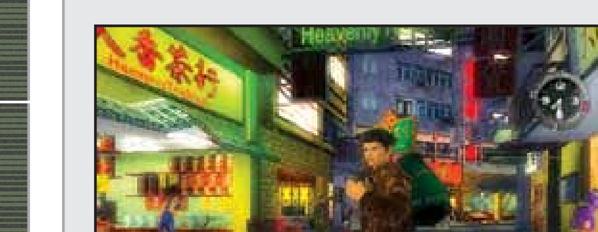
GameFinder

Don't see what you want in big writing with a handy picture? Quickly zip directly to your game of choice.

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We answer every question about Xbox Live that you could ask. **Page 42**


BOING!
DOA XTREME VOLLEYBALL
The most bouncy game of our time. Brings tears to the eyes, it does. **Page 10**

GROK!
BC
Best graphics on Xbox yet? *BC* might just have that and more. **Page 60**



HUT, HUT, HUT
FOOTBALL SHOWDOWN Which game? **Page 50**

MY ACHING SPINE: If it's not too much to ask would you mind not folding me under your armpit. The smell is something less than pleasant and it's killing my spine. And don't leave me in the bathroom... again the smell. Thanks, Magazine #327,567.

WE SMELL A SPIN-OFF: Nothing is more logical than *DOA Xtreme Volleyball*... just a natural extension of a fighting game. Some other possibilities: *DOA Xtreme Mud Wrestling, DOA Deep Tissue Massage, DOA Foxy Boxing,* and *DOA XXX.*

Editor's Letter

Style, and solid substance

A fly on the wall...

■ **Your chance to be in on our casual conversation about all things Xbox...**

Every day we engage in far too much conversation and hypothesis about games, *Simpsons* episodes, and mysterious murder cases, and while everything we say certainly isn't printable, we decided to collect the best (and least offensive) bits especially for you. It's kinda like "The Best of **Official Xbox Magazine**." Sort of.

SOME GUY FROM PSM STOPPING BY TO ARGUE WITH US: So Microsoft *finally* matched Sony's price, huh? (*One day after Sony pre-emptively dropped to $199, Microsoft matched it... and he says "finally." Typical!*)

MIKE: At $199, what kind of an idiot wouldn't buy an Xbox? It's a great DVD player, a huge jukebox... oh, and did I mention it's the most powerful gaming system on the planet?

FRANK: This really screws over Nintendo. When Joe Consumer gets to the store and sees three game consoles (two at $199, and one at $149) he has to make a choice based on quality, not price. Now two of them play DVDs and CDs, and one of them is purple and has a handle. Which one would you buy?

DAVE: There isn't even a choice. Just the custom soundtrack feature alone is enough reason to get an Xbox. I love playing games to my own tunes. And now that I know the light synthesizer cheat... *[Press X, then Y during a song.]*

FRANCESCA: That's true, but I like my spiky-haired RPGs, and I can admit that the purple handle thing has its appeal.

DAN: What plus ever, you can keep your spiky-haired RPGs, the Xbox is getting *Project Ego*... which will completely redefine what an RPG is.

JULIANN: I just wish we had *Grand Theft Auto 3*... Oh, how I love that game.

DAVE: Yeah, you can get out of the car. You should be able to get out of the car in all games, it's the future I tell ya.

MIKE: This is all pointless and you are all a pack of idiots. The Xbox now has the very best version of *Metal Gear Solid* (just look at page 30), and soon enough there will be no shortage of excellent *GTA3* clones on Xbox, including Activision's *True Crime*. And need I remind you that for $199, it comes ready to go online? Not just any old online either, but the absolute coolest and easiest online gaming ever. Nothing else to buy, every game supports the Communicator, and it's all broadband (see feature, page 42).

DAN: Xbox. No laggies. No jaggies.

SOME GUY FROM PSM (NOW FLEEING FROM OFFICE): Yeah... but... we... (*And the door swings shut.*)



Meet the team

Fresh from the noisy (and rather smelly) halls of E3, our staff returns intact (well, except for Mike's liver) and looking a bit green.

Mike Salmon
"Frenetic Seaslug"

Favorite E3 Xbox Game: *Blood Rayne*. Look, I know it's not the obvious choice, but it's got a lot of stuff in it that I really like. Hot gymnastic vampire chicks, for one thing. Evil Nazis for another. You add to that a really complex and artful fighting engine, and with any luck this could turn out to be one of the more intriguing games this year. That and *Halo Next*. I know it was just floating around in Bungie's head at E3, but that counts.
Favorite E3 Non-Xbox Game: *Sims Online*. They should bring that to Xbox.

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Frank O'Connor
"Muffled Wildebeest"

Favorite E3 Xbox Game: Wow. Hard to say. I loved *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance* of course, and there's a special place in my heart for *Namco Museum* and *Dead To Rights*, but basically I'm copping out and saying, any of the online games. You can't underestimate the value of trash talking, no matter what game you're playing. *Unreal Championship* especially!
Favorite E3 Non-Xbox Game: There was a lot of cool PC stuff, and I'm assuming *Mario Sunshine* rocks, in spite of the somewhat N64-looking graphics.

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Sarah Ellerman
"Shenanigan Bobcat"

Favorite E3 Xbox Game: *Blinx: The Time Sweeper*. I love all cats unreservedly, and Blinx is such a brave little furry intrepid time-traveling hero that you don't even feel silly about being into the cute-mascot thing. Plus, it's the perfect realization of the dream we've all had since the advent of the VCR: the ability to pause, rewind, and re-do life. I was *pleading* for pad.
Favorite E3 Non-Xbox Game: I loved THQ's dance game with Britney Spears. It seems to me that if there was ever an excuse to look stupid in your living room, this is it.

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Dan Egger
"Subterfuge Raccoon"

Favorite E3 Xbox Game: *Metal Gear Solid Blond Ambition*, or whatever it's called. Names are for suckers. The addition of the VR missions and the new characters and the extra plot elements and the revamped options and the new graphics and the Dolby 5:1... and oof, I'm really quite out of breath, time for a nap.
Favorite E3 Non-Xbox Game: Everyone is saying *Mario Sunshine*, aren't they? Well I'm all about the safe bet, and while I think the graphics could use some tweaking (i.e., a complete overhaul), you can smell the Miyamoto magic.

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Francesca Reyes
"Apoplectic Hamster"

Favorite E3 Xbox Game: Let's just say that my favorite Xbox game at the show, without a doubt, involves both Ninjas and Gaiden and leave it at that. Still can't guess? Okay, *Ninja Gaiden*. Basically it does all the things that you were dreaming about while looking at the backdrops in *Dead or Alive 3*. Running, jumping, exploring, and most of all, handing down beatings.
Favorite E3 Non-Xbox Game: *Kingdom Hearts* from Square. If you do the math, *Final Fantasy* + Disney = RPG madness and perfection.

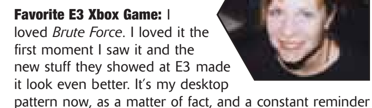
freyes@imaginemedia.com

Holden Hume
"Indivisible Monkey"

Favorite E3 Xbox Game: Although I was stuck here in the office, working like a medieval serf, while the editors cruised around LA in limos making out with Gwyneth Paltrow, they called in by cell phone and told me that *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* from LucasArts was my favorite game, and if I didn't like it, "I could kiss their butts." So there you have it.
Favorite E3 Non-Xbox Game: Again, a call from Francesca Reyes alerted me to the fact that I would very much enjoy playing the PC trailer for *Doom III*. This is so bogus.

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Juliann Brown
"Hilarious Kumquat"



Favorite E3 Xbox Game: I loved *Brute Force*. I loved it the first moment I saw it and the new stuff they showed at E3 made it look even better. It's my desktop pattern now, as a matter of fact, and a constant reminder that squad-based combat with incredible graphics and multiple worlds is the wave of the future. Plus it'll tide me over until *Halo Next*.
Favorite E3 Non-Xbox Game: Anything on the Mac. If you're a Mac person, you'll understand.

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Dave Rees
"Martinized Stoat"

Favorite E3 Xbox Game: *Panzer Dragoon Orta*. The sense of scale, the majestic soundtrack and the constant dragon-related action are so smoothly integrated with one of the best graphic engines I've ever seen, I can hardly wait. I loved the first three and this one is so much bigger and better. and they could still do a *Saga*-style RPG!
Favorite E3 Non-Xbox Game: *Devil May Cry 2*. That's the one game on the PS2 that I would even pull it out of the dusty closet for.

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Grandma Dixie
"Bewildered Varmint"

Favorite E3 Xbox Game: Any game that doesn't make me push all those little buttons. They wreak havoc on my sciatica.
Favorite E3 Non-Xbox Game: I'm hoping that that nice fat boy from *Trading Spaces* gets his own videogame. I don't know what kind of game it would be, but I hope that it would involve helping him remember his deodorant... because he sweats like an angry nun at the Decatur County Fair.

Write a nice old-fashioned paper letter.

■ **DISCLAIMER:** The above conversation has been edited for space, clarity, and to make *PSM* staffers look bad. We apologize profusely.



Issue 09 ■ August 2002

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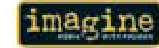
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"At least now the costumes are appropriate."

DEVELOPER: **Team Ninja**
PUBLISHER: **Tecmo** | RELEASE DATE: **Late summer 2002**

Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball

Not only is this NOT a gag, it's actually a pretty amazing game

This wasn't so much unveiled as undressed, and less uncovered than unleashed. It's the most bizarre franchise extension since *Typing of the Dead*, and frankly, you're going to buy it. And yes, that includes our female readers. So before we titillate our less morally-strict readers, let's appease the outraged ones.

Underneath the admittedly skimpy veneer of Lycra and sunscreen lies a remarkably rich, detailed, and varied volleyball sim. Bizarre as it sounds, this even includes what can best be described as some kind of Sapphic Shopping Simulator. You see, to thank your partner (this is two-on-two volleyball) after a win, you can buy her (there's only one guy on the island and he's just watching) gifts, ranging from a new bikini to a pair of insanely expensive cat ears. Again, this is all for real.

There are more than 100 different swimsuit designs available, and the game will give you the ability to create and customize your own. You can also play a mini-game of *DOA3* in an arcade, as well as enjoy some other little surprises.

We want to see chicks in bikinis wearing cat ears as much as the next person.

Now, we want to see chicks in bikinis wearing cat ears as much as the next person (assuming the next person is a lecherous perv with feline attractions), but the shopping is more than madness. Should your partner like her new cat ears, she'll play better and the bond between you will grow stronger. So think of it as team spirit management. Using bikinis and cat ears. And past *DOA* rivalries will also play a part – Hitomi and Kasumi, for example, will make for an interesting match-up. A new player, Lisa, will also be joining the beach bevy.

So while creator Tomonobu Itagaki promises us a thrilling beach volleyball simulation, with rankings, stats, and shopping, he also promises that the island paradise on which all this takes place will be filled with other goodies, including a fully functional casino for when the volleyball isn't going so well, a theater in which to check out your "form," as well as trailers for *Ninja Gaiden* and more, and a radio station, although user-created soundtracks will be supported. Now what was that Sir Mix-a-lot song again…? XBOX

■ The island map shows off Zack's purchase and serves as navigation between the game's various modes, including a casino, an arcade, and a theater.



■ If a one-piece costume is your thing, then so be it.

■ And you can play at different times of day, so suit yourself.

Reef madness

The plot for this game is one of the funniest of all time, and will surely become part of videogame legend. Zack, the Thai boxer from *DOA3*, has won quite a bit of money (he went off to gamble in his end movie in *DOA3*) and has invested it in a private tropical island. He's tricked all the *DOA3* babes into showing up for what they think is a *Dead or Alive 4* tournament. Well, it's not, it's simply a sneaky chance for Zach to ogle the ladeez. And so to make the most of it, the girls laugh it off and decide to enjoy their unexpected vacation playing beach volleyball.

■ **JACKASS!** As you read this, the author is literally relaxing on the beach at the Ohana Keauhou Beach Resort in Hawaii. It's research, he tells us.

■ **BEACHY PEACHY:** It is PURELY a coincidence that these are the highest resolution screen captures we've ever had. Honestly. that's just the way they turned out.

■ Arch-nemesis? Check. Cute girlfriend? Check. Dead father to avenge? Check.

■ Cinematic camera angles help create the atmosphere during expositional scenes...

■ ...but the game is all in real time. You can enter any of the stores and talk to any of the people.

Fighting style

The original *Shenmue* featured fun, but relatively simple, hand-to-hand combat. This sequel really ups the ante, with an astonishing 50 moves available. This may not sound terribly revolutionary when compared to, say, *Virtua Fighter*, where each character has dozens of moves, but for an action-adventure/ RPG, it's something quite new. Ryo can access a wealth of punches, kicks, grapples, and throws, and a combo system allows for an almost unlimited arsenal of attacks. Sega promises that this aspect of the game will be among its most compelling features.

DEVELOPER: **Sega AM2** | PUBLISHER: **Sega Corp.** | RELEASE DATE: **Q4 2002**

Shenmue 2

The Dreamcast's loss is our gain...

The original *Shenmue* was supposed to set the world on fire. It was supposed to be the most ambitious videogame ever made. And it was. Kind of. The game was *so* ambitious, in fact, that it skipped a whole hardware generation and saw the demise of another. In fact, this sequel (*Shenmue* is supposed to be episodic in format) won't ever make it onto the Dreamcast in the US, which is good news for us Xbox owners.

If you aren't familiar with the original game, let's bring you quickly up to speed. Ryo is a leather-jacket-wearing martial arts expert, investigating and avenging the death of his father. His epic quest takes him through gorgeously detailed environments populated with fully interactive characters. You can speak with any of them – and beat up the ones who give you answers you don't like. To break up the action, there's a huge range of secrets and mini-games to discover, including playable classic Sega coin-ops.

Although the premise seems like a combination of RPG and fighting game (which, of course, it is) there's a lot more to *Shenmue* than meets the eye. The mini-games, for one thing, but also the ability to fully immerse yourself in the world. This sequel takes place in Hong Kong where the last game left off, and gives Ryo the chance to get a job in Hong Kong, fight bad guys, eat, drink, and even sleep. The city is populated with literally thousands of characters, and the game's upgrade takes full advantage of the far superior Xbox abilities.

The original game was so ambitious that it skipped an entire hardware generation.

The graphics are staggering, with ultra-detailed textures and complex architecture, all based very closely on real maps, video, and photographs of Hong Kong. The game's creator, Yu Suzuki, spent a great deal of time traveling to the game's many locations to get things just right. Some of the coding on Xbox *Shenmue 2* has happened with the assistance of Microsoft, which helped Sega get very close to the Xbox metal, as it were. The legend of *Shenmue* is set to continue this winter, and we'll update you next issue. XBOX

■ **SEGA SCREAM:** The first iteration of *Shenmue* was supposed to appear on the ill-fated Sega Saturn. The game rocked harder than the system, though.

■ **YU WHAT?:** One of Yu Suzuki's first games, *Out Run*, is said to be in the works as an online game for Xbox. Shhh.



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Plan your month!
Without our calendar, you wouldn't know what to do.

Official Xbox Magazine's E3 Awards

Judging by the games we saw at the 2002 Electronic Entertainment Expo, the Xbox has a bright future ahead of it. We could go on and on, but we'll let the games speak for themselves. Here are some of our favorites and the awards we gave them.



Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus — Game That's More Mortal Kombat Than Mortal Kombat

Coolest Visuals — **Psychonauts**

Tork — Best Beast Morphing Platformer

Project Ego — Most Likely To Be Late, But Still Great

Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance — Game That's More Betterer Than Mortal Kombat

Best Mascot/Most Innovative — **Blinx: The Time Sweeper**

Steel Battalion — Game With The Biggest Peripheral

Panzer Dragoon — Most Awe-Inspiring Bosses

Dead or Alive Xtreme Volleyball — Best Guilty Pleasure

True Crime: Streets of LA — Best GTA Substitute

NFL 2K3 — Most Ambitious Sports Game

MechAssault — Best Use Of Traditional Giant Robots

Best Retro Remake — **Ninja Gaiden**

Harry Potter and The Chamber Of Secrets — Special Award Of Mainstream Excellence

Unreal Championship — Game (s) That Makes Us Most Excited About Xbox Live — Tie

Robotech: Battlecry — Best Use Of Cartoon Giant Robots

Unnamed Infogrames Racer — Best Looking Game Without A Name

Brute Force — The Game That Gets Better Each Time We See It

Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic — Coolest Lightsaber Fights

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon

■ **SOLID PROPS:** *Metal Gear Solid* creator Hideo Kojima, when asked about Ubi Soft's *Splinter Cell*, said that it looked "impressive," which is high praise indeed from the inventor of the genre.

■ ***SHREK* PARTY SHOCKER:** TDK also showed us *Shrek Party* at E3, a game so playable that it caused us to miss the first half of an important appointment. More on that game later.

A bit of the old this and that

If it's important to the Xbox, it's important to us

Naked Ambition

The naked news: It seems that nudity is sneaking its way onto the Xbox. Tecmo's *DOA3 Extreme Volleyball*, features bikini-clad girl fighters bouncing about like never before in gorgeous *DOA3*-style environments. Even more stunning is a hint Tecmo dropped – that there may be topless modes later in the game.

■ "These string bikinis are so confining... I wish I could just take it all off and be free..."

Acclaim announced a shocker of its own with *Dave Mirra BMX XXX*. The game enables players to extensively customize female riders in respects to their breast size and whether they have tops at all. Additionally, one of the rewards for completing gameplay objectives is actually having the coin to go to Scores (the strip joint) and getting to watch real cut-scenes of strippers. Acclaim told us that they contacted the ESRB (purveyors of the rating system) on what would hypothetically be allowed in a Mature-rated game. Under those guidelines, they've reverse engineered *Dave Mirra BMX XXX* and plan to blaze new trails in toplessness, scatology, and swearing.
Why it's important: Games are growing up... but not necessarily maturing.
The Official Xbox Magazine take: Moms everywhere are thankful that the Xbox has parental controls. Teens everywhere are thankful that Mom can't work the Xbox parental controls.

LucasArts shockers

The news: LucasArts has confirmed that two of the biggest *Star Wars* titles in the development pipeline will be coming to the Xbox. *Star Wars Galaxies: An Empire Divided* and *Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast* joins BioWare's *Knights of the Old Republic* and also several key *Star Wars* games already out on the console, establishing the Xbox as the premier *Star Wars* platform.
Why it's important: *Jedi Knight II* is one of the most anticipated first-person shooters of the year, and *Galaxies* is being developed by the people who brought us *EverQuest*. Both look amazing.
The Official Xbox Magazine take: We can't wait for either of these games. *Galaxies* should be especially good thanks to the Xbox's built-in voice communication.



■ Sweet Leia Organa, it's coming!

Good news, bad news

The bad news: Sony finally announced that *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* is exclusive to PS2, as is the series until late 2004. Sony inked a pricey deal with Rockstar games to make the six-million-selling game its own for the next three years.
The good news: Activision will help Xbox bear the brunt of the *GTA* announcement with *True Crime: Streets of L.A.*, which stars a rogue L.A. cop. It combines high-speed driving, martial arts brawling, and gunplay.
Why it's important: We were crossing our fingers for *GTA*, but Sony knew that it had little choice but to keep this big-money franchise out of the hands of its gaining competitors.
The Official Xbox Magazine take: *True Crime* looks really good, but we'll certainly miss *Grand Theft Auto*.

■ It's not *GTA3*, but it's close enough to please.

Price bomb

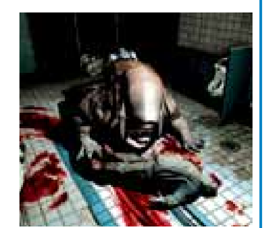
The news: In case you haven't heard, yes, Xbox now costs just $199. Microsoft upped the ante in the console wars by dropping the price of the Xbox by $100. The move had been rumored for quite some time, and although both Nintendo and Sony publicly (and vehemently) denied that they were considering price drops this summer, both companies scrambled to cut prices as soon as it became apparent that the Xbox drop would happen.
Why it's important: In the consumer world, price is everything. And judging by early sales response, the public has embraced the $199 price point with sales of the console rapidly increasing since the announcement.
The Official Xbox Magazine take: Smart move, right time. It should be a great holiday season for Xbox.



■ Nothing better than saving money.

FPS-heavy Activision preps Doom III

The news: Activision finally threw us a bone on *Doom III*, the third full installment of Id Software's time-honored FPS, powered by an all-new 3D graphics engine. The movies of the game at E3 were absolutely gorgeous and should push the Xbox to its limits. Insiders in the development team hinted that the game was already running on Xbox hardware.
Why it's important: Activision is already bringing Id's other recent blockbuster, *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*, to Xbox later this year. Also, Activision is hot off a dandy of a fourth fiscal fourth quarter, which, incidentally, saw Xbox as its top revenue-generating platform.
The Official Xbox Magazine take: Bring it. We love to be terrified. The way the game uses light and shadow is perfect for the Xbox graphics hardware, and if you throw Dolby 5:1 game audio into the mix, then you have a recipe for pant-crapping unequaled in the history of videogames.



■ Best-looking shooter ever? Oh, yeah.

GameWatch ***A couple of different ways to "eat it"***



MX Superfly

Projected release: Fall 2002
The good stuff: Incredible air, amazing stunts, and all the fun of MX motorbikes. Doesn't take itself too seriously, either – and if there's a *Tony Hawk* of motorcycle racing games, this would have to be it. Tons of tricks, stunts, and moves to pull off, all in a gloriously smooth and rich graphic environment.
The scary stuff: We worry it may end up suffering from port-itis.



Pac-Man World 2

Projected release: Q4 2002
The good stuff: Pac-Man's back and while he can still swallow pills faster than a participant in the Whitney Houston/Bobby Brown marriage, this time around he's able to do a bunch of other stuff like jumping, swimming, roller blading, ice-skating, flip kicking, and butt-bouncing.
The scary stuff: Does Pac-Man even have a butt to bounce with?

■ **WILL GAMING EVER GROW UP?:** We don't mind the gratuitousness, but if the videogame world really wants to gain respect as "art," there needs to be "tasteful" and plot-related nudity and swearing, not just the blatant "IT'S A GAME ABOUT SWEARING AND NUDITY."

It's the Xbox handheld ... kinda

Thanks to the Xbox Mobile Monitor by Interact



At first glance, InterAct's sleek 5.6" LCD color monitor for the Xbox seems like a ridiculous add-on for a machine as hefty as the Xbox. Microsoft's monster isn't exactly as mobile as a Game Boy, so why on Earth would anyone create a portable screen for it? The answer is simple... it's the perfect product for a LAN party.

Bringing four Xbox units and four TVs together can be such an undertaking (in terms of the sheer physical weight of the things you have to lug around) that many gamers simply never get to experience the fun of LAN gaming. But that's why the Xbox Mobile Monitor was invented. This crisp little monitor snaps directly onto the top of your Xbox and plugs right into the back of your Xbox. Once it's hooked up, you've got the perfect setup for a LAN party. Now all you need is a System Link cable (or Ethernet hub and cables) and a couple of friends.

The Xbox Mobile Monitor has two built-in stereo speakers with "virtual surround sound" and two headphone inputs, which is perfect for *Halo* matches. The monitor accepts RCA inputs for use with DVD players, VCRs, or – heaven forbid – another game system. You can even fold the monitor down for safe transport.

InterAct's new monitor should be in stores around the 2002 holiday season. Which, coincidentally, is the same time that the bulk of Xbox Live games (many of which support System Link play) will be in stores. If you don't have a broadband Internet connection, but you still want to experience the future of multiplayer gaming... this may be the answer for you.

Ten Most Wanted

Sometimes it seems like our favorite games can't get here soon enough. Even though we love the ones we have, more is always better. Here are the ones we just can't wait for any longer.

OUR OFFLINE WISHES COME TRUE

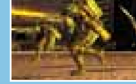
Metal Gear Solid: Substance
Finally! It's announced and coming to Xbox. Now we have to wait until November… so long.

BC
Quite honestly, there isn't a better looking game coming to the Xbox. It is absolutely stunning. Check it out on page 60.



Panzer Dragoon Orta
A classic franchise lands on Xbox, and with Smilebit at the helm, we're sure it'll deliver. But October is still too far away!

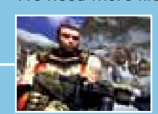
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
A stealthy *Metal Gear*-type game that is so impressive that the creator of *Metal Gear* (Hideo Kojima) is looking forward to playing it.



Ninja Gaiden
Tecmo and Itagaki have finally unveiled what's sure to be an arcade-action masterpiece, and we can't wait to get our hands on it. Even at this early stage it is a jaw-dropper.

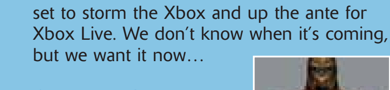
OUR ONLINE DREAMS

Unreal Championship
We need more first-person shooters, and why not choose from one of the best franchises out there? We can't wait.



Halo Next
It was officially announced at E3 and it was officially confirmed to be online. Sufficed to say, this is THE game we must have for Xbox Live.

Phantasy Star Online
Sega's spell-casting saga is set to storm the Xbox and up the ante for Xbox Live. We don't know when it's coming, but we want it now…



Star Wars Galaxies
The most anticipated massively multiplayer RPG ever is coming to Xbox Live and we can't wait to settle in for some Wamprat en-killenating.

Return to Castle Wolfenstein
We know it's coming to Xbox, but we don't know if it'll be online (we also don't know why it *wouldn't* be online). If it is, then we're in for a Nazi-killing treat of large proportions.

■ **CALL US ARTY:** The picture above does not mean that there is a new orange Xbox or that the Interact monitor comes in orange. It is simply an artistic look at the Xbox/monitor combo through tangerine-colored glasses. It's a Picasso!

The Rumor Mole

In the bathrooms behind the closed doors...

Each year, videogame professionals get together for five days in Los Angeles to show off their games to the world… that's pretty cool, but the best part of E3 (Electronic Entertainment Expo) from a Mole's perspective is that rarest and holiest of combinations: loose-lipped game-makers plus free alcohol. I'm now going to take you on a rollicking rumor ride through the week that was E3 2002.

Monday, 11am

After having some trouble getting through airport security with my masterful disguise, I eventually board a United Airlines flight to LA. I conveniently choose a seat next to a couple of Eidos employees who are kind enough to chat about *DX2: The Invisible War*. Apparently this game was going to be an Xbox exclusive right up until a week before E3, when Eidos got sales reports back on *Deus Ex* for the PS2. The game sold much better than expected and caused Eidos to rethink their strategy and make this a multiplatform game. However, the two guys sitting next to me couldn't even fathom how this game could be made on the PS2. One of 'em even said, "It's like trying to put a Genesis game on the Game Boy."

Monday, 6pm

Microsoft Press Conference: Xbox price drops to $199… of course, I already knew this (being the Mole, I know most things before they happen). Microsoft unveils Xbox Live and its aggressive pricing structure. What isn't announced but is discussed later in the men's room is the future direction of Xbox and Xbox Live. I could share what was said, but this time they really would come after me. All I will say is that Microsoft isn't playing for second place in the console market... at all. Stay tuned.



Drunken developers pee (and blab) a lot.

Tuesday, 9pm

While the rest of the journalist geeks head off to see a private screening of *Episode II*, I hang around the very interesting Konami party. Our cover story on *MGS2: Substance* is just the tip of the iceberg, at least that is what one tipsy Konami rep was secretly telling an industry friend at the finger food table. It seems that all of Konami's games will now be coming to Xbox and PS2, and the developers are so stoked on the Xbox hardware that they are only doing the PS2 version because they have to.

Wednesday, 1am

After the Microsoft party I head back to the hotel bar at the Wilshire Grand… sitting around a table eating peanuts and discussing top-secret plans are a few Sony execs. I won't bore you with all that was said, but the biggest topic of conversation was the unveiling of Xbox Live. One Sony employee even said, "There is no way the PS2 online strategy can compete with that... hopefully this will mean an earlier debut of PS3."

Thursday, 7pm

Sega Press Reception: Virtua. Fighter. Xbox. But for this version, the Mole hears that online features from Sega's VFNet in Japan have been added... not to mention some special Xbox upgrades.

Live from  Japan

Koji has landed.

Hi, US X Freaks!

This time, I'd like to compare between E3 show and Tokyo Game Show (TGS). Both shows are for console/computer games only. E3 is a trade show – however TGS is also for the consumers and the game freaks. There are no trade-only spaces in TGS.

Also at TGS, they aren't just exhibiting games. There is a lot of selling of special items from game characters, for example figures, posters, stickers, trading cards, books, foods, and others like them. And there are hundreds of amateur costume players (Some of them are so cute and sexy. Please imagine real girls from *Dead or Alive 3*! Yes, some of them are really strange and crazy!). In brief, TGS is a great festival for gamers.

But as a matter of course, TGS has some problems. TGS is just a service for gamers, however the exhibiting costs are very expensive. Recently, the number of exhibitors has decreased. Now it will be held only once a year, unfortunately. On the other hand, E3 is better for press. Because journalists can see many new titles, play games without haste, and don't have to meet with many common children. Until quite recently, most of Japanese gamers aren't interested in foreign games. But now, the situations are changing day by day, with Xbox games like *Halo*, *Project Gotham Racing*, and *RalliSport Challenge*. So nowadays some of the cutting edge Japanese gamers are starting to pay serious attention to E3, I feel.

But some of excellent Western games such as *GTA3* or *Max Payne* won't release for console in Japan, including Xbox due to questionable moral content for children. Why not? Because there isn't a definite rating standard in Japanese game industry. I know that is a great loss for our game culture. Though almost all Japanese love Hollywood movies, so there are many chances to success for US games in Japan, I believe. I hope that Microsoft tries to change such a bad custom in Japan, and show the excellent foreign games for Japanese gamers.

Koji Aizawa
Editor in Chief
Famitsu Xbox, Japan



GameWatch

The Emperor's new tomb rings



Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb

Due: Holidays 2002
What's good about it: Indy's latest adventure lets you follow the world's greatest adventurer through 10 levels of exploration. You'll roam through China, Prague, and Istanbul with a healthy dose of bare-knuckle brawling thrown in. And if fisticuffs aren't your thing, the game enables you to use ordinary objects like table legs and shovels to dispatch your foes.
What's scary: Harrison Ford just turned 60... Indy could be getting old.



Lord of the Rings

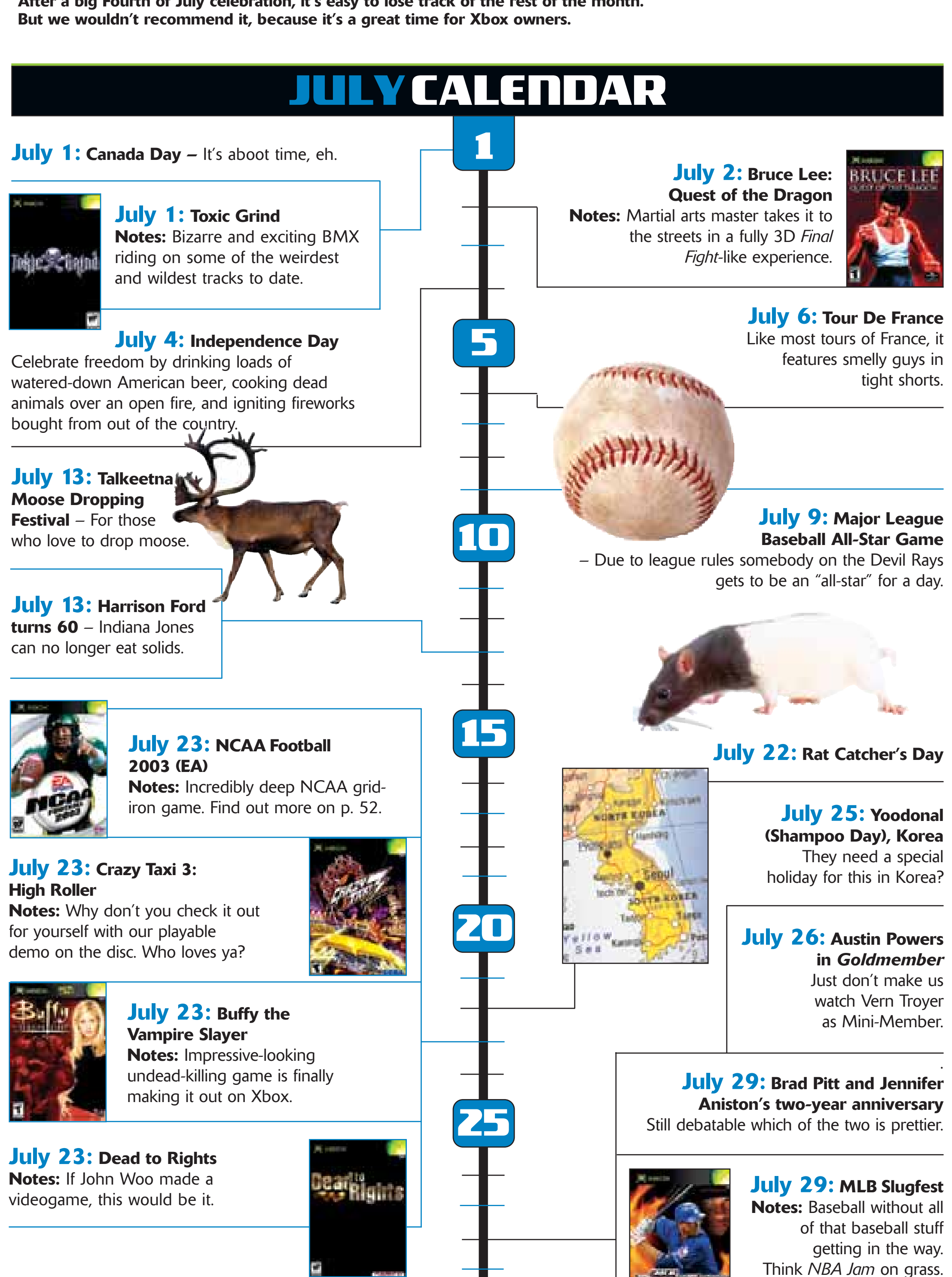
Due: Q4 2002
What's good about it: One thing that really stands out to us is the game's use of the Xbox hard drive to create massive levels that are flat out packed with detail. It really helps brings to life the legendary fantasy novels.
What's scary: With another *Lord of the Rings* game in the works, could this be too much Tolkien for even the hardcore fans? The good news is that both games are completely different in style. This one is an RPG and EA's is an action/adventure.

HE DIDN'T MEAN YOU: When Koji referred to Joe Consumer as "many common children" he did so with all due respect. In fact he often calls his favorite people "commoners." At least that's what he always calls us, and he likes us... doesn't he?

What to do in JULY

After a big Fourth of July celebration, it's easy to lose track of the rest of the month. But we wouldn't recommend it, because it's a great time for Xbox owners.

JULY CALENDAR





July 1: Canada Day – It's aboot time, eh.

July 1: Toxic Grind
Notes: Bizarre and exciting BMX riding on some of the weirdest and wildest tracks to date.

July 2: Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon
Notes: Martial arts master takes it to the streets in a fully 3D *Final Fight*-like experience.

July 4: Independence Day
Celebrate freedom by drinking loads of watered-down American beer, cooking dead animals over an open fire, and igniting fireworks bought from out of the country.

July 6: Tour De France
Like most tours of France, it features smelly guys in tight shorts.

July 9: Major League Baseball All-Star Game – Due to league rules somebody on the Devil Rays gets to be an "all-star" for a day.

July 13: Talkeetna Moose Dropping Festival – For those who love to drop moose.

July 13: Harrison Ford turns 60 – Indiana Jones can no longer eat solids.

July 22: Rat Catcher's Day

July 23: NCAA Football 2003 (EA)
Notes: Incredibly deep NCAA grid-iron game. Find out more on p. 52.

July 23: Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller
Notes: Why don't you check it out for yourself with our playable demo on the disc. Who loves ya?

July 23: Buffy the Vampire Slayer
Notes: Impressive-looking undead-killing game is finally making it out on Xbox.

July 23: Dead to Rights
Notes: If John Woo made a videogame, this would be it.

July 25: Yoodonal (Shampoo Day), Korea
They need a special holiday for this in Korea?

July 26: Austin Powers in *Goldmember*
Just don't make us watch Vern Troyer as Mini-Member.

July 29: Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston's two-year anniversary
Still debatable which of the two is prettier.

July 29: MLB Slugfest
Notes: Baseball without all of that baseball stuff getting in the way. Think *NBA Jam* on grass.

***Note:** All dates subject to change, except for the Fourth of July. How could that possibly change?

Under the Radar

The best Xbox games you've never heard of

■ Not totally unlike Interplay's classic *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance.*

New game? What's it called?
Dungeons and Dragons Heroes.

Who's making it?
Infogrames Hunt Valley (located somewhere in Maryland).

What's the game about?
If you don't know the embarrassment and secret joy of holing up in a basement with a couple of pale (and aromatic) buddies achieving the rank of Dungeon Master, no amount of explaining will make this game clear to you. For those of us who are proud geeks, however, this is the game we've been waiting for. In addition to nabbing the publishing rights to BioWare's D&D-based PC RPG *Neverwinter Nights*, Infogrames is designing a combat-heavy dungeon crawl that supports up to four players on Xbox in Story mode. Accepting one of four faithfully re-created classes – fighter, wizard, cleric and rogue, each with its own playing style and character building system lifted from the 3rd Edition *D&D Handbook* – you'll traverse a broad range of enchanted, fully interactive 3D environments to reclaim the Planar Gems and vanquish evil.

Why should we care?
Xbox could use a good dungeon crawl, and those based on *Dungeons and Dragons* usually rank among the most immersive. In fact, *Heroes* has drawn many of the enemies directly from the 3rd Edition of the *Dungeons and Dragons Manual*. Not only will you manage extensive customization of and upgrades to your weapons, but also in making it console-friendly Infogrames will let you map your actions – such as attacks, feats, skills and spells – easily to your Xbox Controller. However, it should prove to be a bit more cerebral than *Gauntlet* on Xbox.

Why haven't we heard of it yet?
In a giant, messy deal, Infogrames bought much of Hasbro Interactive, which owns as a subsidiary Wizards of the Coast Inc. So, Infogrames has some claims to that rich content. However, Interplay had been publishing the *D&D*-based RPGs of many quality studios for quite a while, including a version of the Snowblind Studios-developed *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*, which will release on Xbox later this year.

■ **CANADA FACT:** Canada was invented as a fake America during the Cold War by the Soviet Union as a place to train Soviets soldiers to invade the US. That's why it's so perfect with no crime and high literacy.

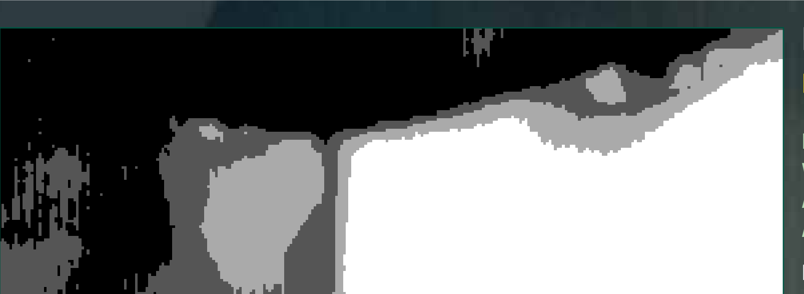
Skate or die. Snake gets to live his Tony Hawk dreams at last.

The 200+ VR missions add hours on end to this game.

New scenes, new situations.

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: Substance

Seven lessons that other big games (including yours, Mario) could learn from this amazing update.



MISSION BRIEFING:

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE

Due on Xbox — November 2002
VR Missions — 200+
Alternate Missions — 100+
All New "Snake's Tale" Missions — 5

In development since the release of *MGS2* in Japan

The Perfect Game?

In the gloriously bitmapped pantheon of great videogames, *Metal Gear Solid* deserves a comfy, padded seat right next to the best of the legendary game franchises. In fact, after seeing *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*, it's obvious that the series deserves a spot right alongside *Mario*, *Final Fantasy*, and *Zelda* as one of the top console game franchises of all time.

In fact, one of the few complaints that gamers lobbied against the original *Metal Gear Solid 2* was that it lacked... well, *substance*. Some (including... um... us) felt it was a fine cinematic experience that was closer kin to a big-budget movie than a traditional game that lacked the depth and replayability that the upper-echelon games share. Well, judging from the aptly titled *Substance*, Konami has learned quite a few important lessons in making a great game a near-perfect game. And now that we've seen this, we wonder if a few other classic franchises could learn some lessons as well.

Lesson 1

Take Yourself Seriously… But Not Too Seriously.

■ **Who should be paying attention:**
FINAL FANTASY
■ **Who has this lesson down:**
ZELDA, GTA3



■ Maybe it would be a good idea to try grinding objects that don't explode so much.

As shown in *Substance*:
SKATEBOARDING MODE

We love playing a game with a serious, thought-provoking story as much as the next classic game fan, but every once in a while you've just got to lighten things up. A traditional Japanese RPG, for instance, can last more than 40 hours, and over that amount of time, the misty-eyed melodrama and unavoidable deaths of party members can get a bit heavy. Maybe some of these games that take themselves so seriously should take a look at *Substance*.

The original *Metal Gear Solid 2* had its share of offbeat moments that helped lighten up the game's heavy plot, but in *Substance*, we get a lot more to play around with. For starters, the game is packed with tons of new goodies (we'll get into them later) and perhaps the most unexpected videogame surprise in several years… a *Metal Gear Solid* skateboarding mode.

Yep, you heard that right. *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance* features a special mini-game mode that will allow you to jump on a skateboard and ride. Solid Snake can now grind rails, nail 720s, and break offshore loitering ordinances in the same environment that he just walked through, shooting up bad guys. This mini-game is an offshoot of Konami's upcoming *Evolution Skateboarding*, a traditional skating game in development that features our old friend Snake as one of the characters.

Because this mini-game is an excerpt of a full skateboarding game, you can be sure that it won't be a slapped-together mini-bonus. You'll actually be able to pull off big moves, skate around on the quarterpipes of the Big Shell, and generally make a spectacle of yourself in front of all the other mercenaries.

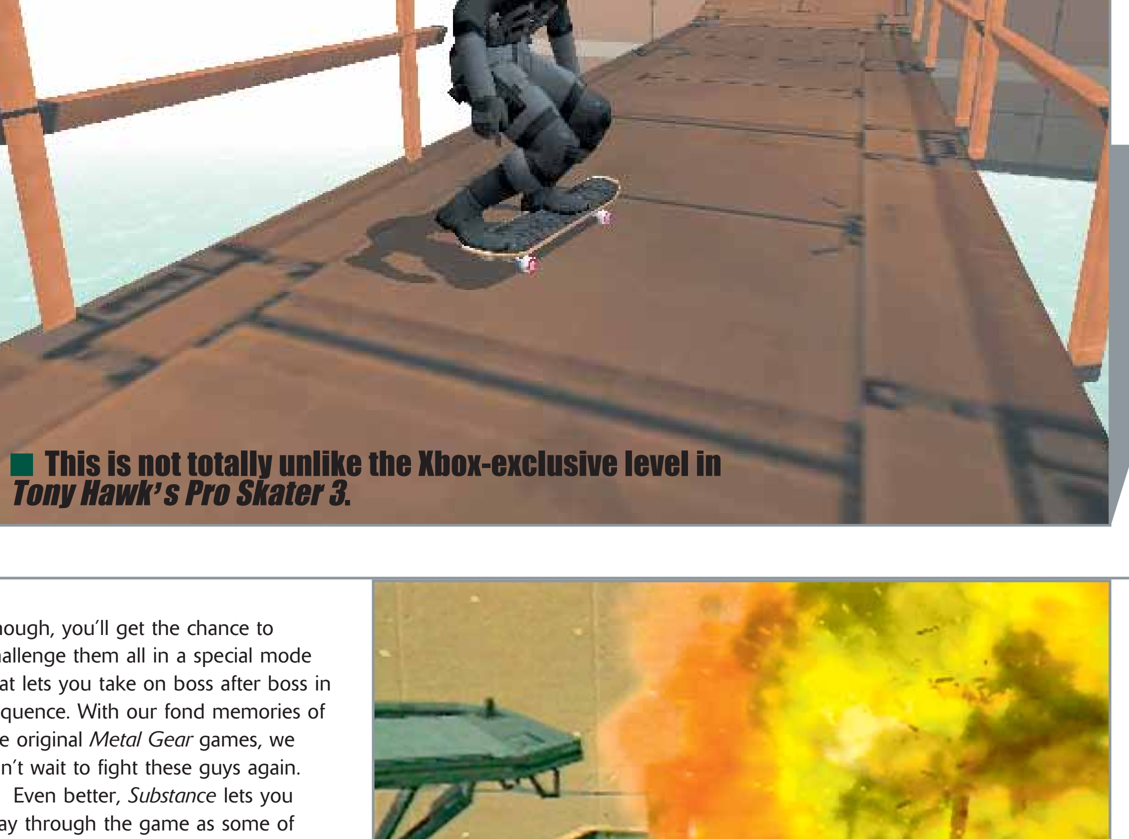


■ Some of the additions read like a most-wanted list, while others, like skateboarding, we never thought about.

Lesson 2

Memorable Characters Matter

■ **Who should be paying attention:**
DOOM III (and all other shooters without memorable lead characters)
■ **Who has this lesson down:**
MARIO, ZELDA


■ This is not totally unlike the Xbox-exclusive level in *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3*.

As shown in *Substance*:
NEW PLAYABLE COSTUMES, AND BOSS BATTLE MODE

Like you, we've had it up to about here (somewhere right above our mandible but below our supraorbital notch) with wisecracking furballs, Lara clones, and grizzled guys in black trench coats. Maybe it's time for some original character design… like the characters in *MGS2*.

Say what you will about their strange names and bizarre personalities, but you certainly can't say that the characters in *Metal Gear Solid* are derivative. After all, when was the last time that you saw a videogame character like Fortune who uses the power of luck to deflect bullets, missiles, and presumably IRS audits? Or a rollerblading demolitionist with an unfortunate glandular condition like Fatman?

In fact, you'll even get to face off against classic *Metal Gear Solid* characters in special boss levels. In this section of the game, you'll run into classic bosses like Psycho Mantis, Sniper Wolf, Vulcan Raven, and Painfully-Itchy Orangutan (just seeing if you were paying attention with the last one). And as if facing down one of these master criminals isn't difficult enough, you'll get the chance to challenge them all in a special mode that lets you take on boss after boss in sequence. With our fond memories of the original *Metal Gear* games, we can't wait to fight these guys again.

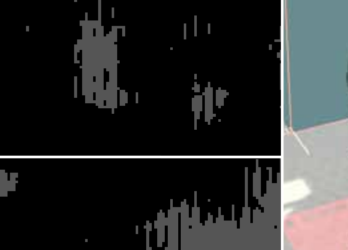
Even better, *Substance* lets you play through the game as some of your favorite characters. This may not sound that exciting to those unfamiliar with *Metal Gear Solid 2*, but once you play through the original version, what could sound better than returning as Pliskin, Snake in a Tuxedo, Snake in his original *Metal Gear* uniform, or (our personal favorite) Ninja. Playing as these characters means so much because we enjoyed watching them in the game.

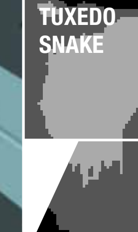

■ Snake finally gets a chance to destroy some Cyphers for himself.

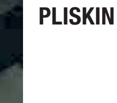
PLAYABLE UNIFORMS


SNAKE


RAIDEN

NINJA


TUXEDO SNAKE


PLISKIN


CLASSIC SNAKE


■ **NES LOVE AND HATE:** Bizarrely, Hideo Kojima had nothing at all to do with the NES conversion of *Metal Gear* from the *MSX* original. It was some other dudes.

■ **MOST OBSCURE *METAL GEAR*?:** *Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake* for the MSX 2 was only ever released in Japan and it's quite different from *Snake's Revenge*.



Lesson 3

Teach New Players To Be Master Players

■ **Who should be paying attention:**
TOMB RAIDER
■ **Who has this lesson down:**
MARIO, VIRTUA TENNIS

As shown in *Substance*:
VR MISSIONS

Although there is much to be said for in-game training (which is done so well in *Mario*), nothing beats a great training mode. And there is no training mode in the videogame world that's as deep, as thought out, or simply as massive as the VR training in the PlayStation's *Metal Gear Solid Integral*. None, that is, until *Substance* rolled around.

With more than 200 VR training stages, no other game comes even close to the sheer number of training modes available in *Substance*. Many of the first levels are training for simple skills such as sneaking, using items, and shooting. Others combine a number of the skills for more difficult challenges. And another set of challenges test your abilities with a massive array of complex puzzles.

Once you learn the basics, the VR Missions get even more difficult, putting everything together to create some of the toughest missions you'll ever face. In fact, you'll even be able to improve your skills at fencing, using Ninja's handy bullet-deflecting, baddy-slicing, chick-attracting sword. Several VR missions will even test your fine-tuned swashbuckling skills, requiring you to slice and dice with precision.

Heck, if you've got the patience to make it through all the VR missions, you get to see some more instances of LESSON 1 (pay attention, there's a quiz later). Once again, the makers of *Substance* don't take things too seriously. In one mission, you'll face off against 50' Gurlukovich mercenaries who are rampaging through a virtual city like giant virtual Godzillas. And did we mention that they even have spine spikes running down their backs like Japan's favorite rubber-suited taxi stomper? No? We should have.



■ Of course, playing the VR missions as Snake will probably feel most natural for fans of the series.

■ The VR missions basically comprise a whole new game.

■ Raiden is trying to stay out of sight. His arms hurt.

Lesson 4

Push the Technology

■ **Who should be paying attention:**
MARIO SUNSHINE
■ **Who has this lesson down:**
HALO, FINAL FANTASY

As shown in *Substance*:
A DUAL-LAYER DVD ENTIRELY FILLED WITH GAME DATA AND IMPROVED GRAPHICS

When *Metal Gear Solid 2* first debuted over two years ago, it was the best-looking PlayStation2 game ever made. It still holds the crown today – yet judging by what we've seen so far, the Xbox version looks even better. That might be because Konami had to go back to the basics when making this game for the Xbox.

Programming for the PS2 is not a simple task, and those who squeezed the most out of the system (like the *MGS2* team) had to hard code for the PS2 specifically. Because of this, Kojima and company rebuilt *Metal Gear Solid* from the ground up for the Xbox... and while they used much of the same art as they used in the original game, they also added some graphical goodies like bump-mapping for us Xbox freaks.

The team also added a cool extra feature to the game that takes advantage of the Xbox's internal clock. While playing through the VR missions, you might notice that many of them take place at the same time you're playing the game. If, for instance, you're playing at night, the missions will be set at night. If you play at noon, you can expect some sunlight. It's a little touch that adds a lot to the game... especially for those of us who worry a lot about the metaphysical balance of the videogame space/time continuum.

And lest we forget, you just know that they're packing a lot of great stuff into this game, because its data completely fills a dual layer DVD. Now that's a lot of game.

■ **MSX *METAL GEAR* CHEAT:** For 99 rations in the original MSX version of *Metal Gear* (for the three people on earth who actually have it) press F1 to pause and then type ISOLATION.



A chat with the master

We had the opportunity recently to sit down with legendary game creator Hideo Kojima and ask him about his intriguing new twist on *Metal Gear Solid 2* and the little details that make it great.



■ METAL GEAR MASTERMIND HIDEO KOJIMA GOES GREEN.

US: First of all, tell us about the "Snake's Tales" missions.
HIM: In *Sons of Liberty*, the story is complete, so what we did is take the different arenas in that game (which are the tanker, the plant, and Arsenal Gear), and we take the characters from *Sons of Liberty* (Snake, Raiden, Ocelot, and all the other characters), and put them together. We made five different stories using these things, stories that do not relate to the stories in *Sons of Liberty*.

US: Will they affect the game's ending?
HIM: Each of these Snake's Tales will have their own ending. For example, Meryl from the previous game appears. So you'll see characters that that will only be in *Substance*.

US: Ninja is playable – does he have any special characteristics?
HIM: The Ninja can use his sword and do the somersault. You'll be able to use the Ninja in stages that utilize his characteristics. In *Sons of Liberty*, Raiden was able to use his sword to cut vertically or horizontally, but really it didn't matter in the game. In some of the VR mission stages, you actually have to cut horizontally and vertically. You have to take direction into account.

US: Did you add any graphic improvements to the game because of the Xbox?
HIM: Yes, the Xbox version will probably will look a little better than the PS2 version, and we've used bump-mapping in the places that we wanted to use it. Some things will look different on the Xbox. For example, night vision goggles or infrared goggles will look different. Also, I am revealing exclusively to **Official Xbox Magazine** that the game is going to read the time off the internal clock, so, if you're playing at night it will be nighttime in the VR stage. Or [perhaps] the weather will change. So it's weird, because it's combining real-life environments with the VR environments.

> **"IT WOULD BE GREAT IF WE COULD JUST TURN *SPLINTER CELL* INTO *METAL GEAR SOLID X*. IT WOULD BE EASY FOR US."**

US: What features did you add to this game that were originally added to the European mode?
HIM: We added a couple of modes like the Boss Survival mode that allows you to fight all the bosses consecutively with either Snake or Raiden. The Casting Theater mode lets you take selective polygon demos and change the polygon models. Let's say you have soldiers coming at you, you can turn them into Solid Snake. It's fun to watch when you have middle-aged old ladies coming down at you. We also added another model that you can select, which is Ninja, and a new difficulty mode, which is the European Extreme mode, which is really difficult.

US: Where there any control changes made because of the Xbox game controller?
HIM: Yes, obviously there are differences in these controllers so we are making changes. I'm not used to the Xbox controller yet, and I have to say... it is quite big. I'm trying to figure out what control configurations are the best for these changes.

US: Videogame technology has advanced to the point that developers can create fully interactive cinematic experiences. Where do you think videogames are heading?
HIM: I think that games will mainly go in a couple directions. The first is that you assume the role as a hero... or someone. And when you assume this role, a story is born, and you basically follow this story, just like *Sons of Liberty*. Then you have the second kind of games where we game creators provide players an arena. That could be the Internet, where we provide the tools and the playground where people get together and have their own fun their own way. Then I'm thinking about a third kind of games wherein you incorporate real objects like robots and networks and computer graphics… combining all that and doing something. I think you'll see these three kinds of game.

US: Can the unpredictable experience of online gameplay ever match the storytelling of a finely crafted game?
HIM: It would be very difficult right now to try to tell a story of that scale and depth in the online world. It would be very difficult, but I believe there will always be a way to do it.

US: If you could boil down the one thing that makes your games so enjoyable, what would that be?
HIM: I think the joke factor, that it's funny.

US: You've no doubt seen many games "inspired by the stealth and action of the *MGS* series." Which have impressed you the most, and what are you currently looking forward to?
HIM: *Splinter Cell*. I liked how they incorporated opening the door a little bit and peeking in or using the fiberscope. The fiberscope is something we thought of but could never do because we thought that it would be a little complicated. They've done it really well, so I'm really looking forward to that game. It would be great if we could turn that game into *Metal Gear Solid X*. It would be very easy for us.



■ Snake finds himself in another *Substance*-only situation.



■ People put bombs in the darndest places.

■ **REAL LIFE PUZZLE-SOLVING:** In the middle of our interview with Hideo Kojima, our tape ran out and our befuddled reporter couldn't figure out how to eject the tape. Fifteen minutes later Mr. Kojima finally uncovered the secret... open it. Puzzle solved.

Lesson 5

Tweak our Expectations

■ **Who should be paying attention:**
GRAN TURISMO
■ **Who has this lesson down:**
ZELDA, TONY HAWK

As shown in *Substance*:

SNAKE AND RAIDEN IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

Sometimes when you're playing a port of a game or a special edition of a game, the extras you get are few and far between. In today's console market, publishers have discovered that they can make loads of cash by simply making the exact same game for three different systems. Because of this, we weren't expecting any major surprises with *MGS: Substance*.

We should have known better. Because the first and most notable surprise that sent us reeling was the appearance of Solid Snake as the playable character in the Big Shell levels of the game. For those of you not familiar with *Metal Gear Solid 2*, we're about to reveal one of the biggest secrets in the history of videogames, so look away and skip this next paragraph.

DUDE, REALLY, WE WARNED YOU, YOU SHOULD SKIP THIS PARAGRAPH. SO THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE. ARE YOU STILL HERE? OKAY, IF YOU'RE REALLY SURE… In the original *Metal Gear Solid 2*, the game switched the main character from Snake to a young soldier named Raiden in such a shocking fashion that many gamers were left wondering what on Earth happened. Well, in this version you can finally play through the entire second half of the game as Snake, which is something we've wanted to do since we got our hands on the original. Hey, you can even play through the first part of the game on the tanker as the young buck Raiden. We can't wait to see what he can do to the bad guys with his set of skills. Konami even recorded new dialogue with the original voice actors so that this switch will make some sort of sense in the plot. However, don't expect the plot to change because you're playing as someone else. *Metal Gear Solid 2* told a story, and this game stays true to that tale… it just lets us have a little fun during the telling. Needless to say, this is a big enough surprise to entice us to play though the first game all over again.

So, long story short, you can play as Snake anywhere in the game… and you couldn't before. Play the game. Just play the game. You'll understand once you finish… 'nuff said.

Anyway, it's big surprises like these that make even those of us who've played entirely through the original several times want to play through this version a couple more times.



■ **Hey, Snake had nothing to do with this mess and he's not cleaning it up.**



■ You never know who will show up in this game… It's like *Metal Gear Love Boat.*

■ Yes, Raiden *is* deflecting bullets with his sword.



■ **The graphics engine has remained largely unchanged, but Xbox will feature 480p resolution and bump-mapping.**

Lesson 6

Go the Extra, Extra Mile

■ **Who should be paying attention:**
STREET FIGHTER SERIES
■ **Who has this lesson down:**
HALF-LIFE, TEKKEN/SOUL CALIBUR

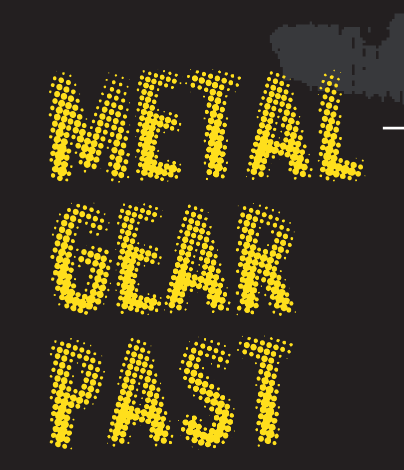
As shown in *Substance*:

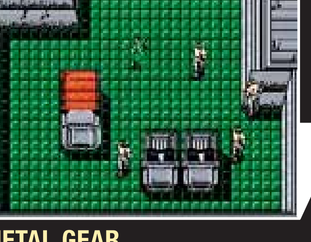
FIVE ALL-NEW SNAKE MISSIONS

This game has enough extras for two separate sequels, but apparently that wasn't good enough for its creators. Added to all the other goodies are five new adventures called Snake's Tales.

These are not VR missions and they're not hastily slapped-together exploration maps… these are five brand-new adventures set in the rich world of *Metal Gear Solid*. Although there isn't much information on these special adventures yet, we were able to squeeze a few game details out of Hideo Kojima. You want the juicy details? We'd love to tell you, but all we can say right now is that the game will be set in the worlds already explored in *MGS2*, and you will face villains from past *Metal Gear* games.

Oh yeah, each of the missions tells a completely new story and each has a brand new cinematic ending. And from what we hear behind the scenes, these missions are packed with brand-new gameplay and cool storytelling. You know, maybe we're just asking a little too much from all those other classic game franchises. After all, who could actually compete with all of this?





METAL GEAR

Debuted in: 1987
Set in: 1995
System: MSX, NES
■ Snake's first mission introduced the world to *Metal Gear* brains-over-brawn gameplay, twisty plots, the Codec, and the use of cool military gadgets.
Fact: Several story changes were made between the MSX version in Europe and Japan and the NES version in the US.



METAL GEAR 2: SOLID SNAKE

Debuted in: 1990
Set in: 1999
System: MSX2
■ This sequel boasted vastly improved graphics and the first appearance of the now-familiar personal radar.
Fact: *Metal Gear 2* never made it to the US.



METAL GEAR 2: SNAKE'S REVENGE

Debuted in: 1990
Set in: Circa 1997
System: NES
■ This is the only *Metal Gear* game not handled by Kojima's development team, and it shows. The story is so laughable and the gameplay so changed that this game is not even considered part of the *Metal Gear* canon by hardcore fans.
Fact: The main villain in this groaner was called Higharolla Kockamamie. Commence eye-rolling now.



METAL GEAR SOLID

Debuted in: 1998
Set in: 2005
System: PlayStation, PC
■ This is the game that sent the *Metal Gear* franchise into the videogame elite. Thanks to its cutting-edge 3D graphics, cinematic storytelling, and true-to-the-past gameplay, *Metal Gear Solid* became a legendary game.
Fact: In a fourth-wall-breaking twist, this *MGS* actually requires you to read a Codec frequency of the back of your game package in order to move on in the game.



METAL GEAR SOLID INTEGRAL/ VR MISSIONS

Debuted in: 1999
Set in: 2005
System: PlayStation
■ Kojima introduced the concept of VR Missions to the world of *Metal Gear*, paving the way for *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*.
Fact: *MGS Integral* was released in Japan with the full game and the VR Missions. US gamers had to buy *MGS VR Missions* separately.



METAL GEAR SOLID/ GHOST BABEL

Debuted in: 2000
Set in: 2002
System: Game Boy Color
■ This Game Boy Color *Metal Gear* title mixed many of the new gameplay elements found in *Metal Gear Solid* with the simple top-down graphics of the original *Metal Gear* titles.
Fact: Although this game was called *Metal Gear Solid* in the US, it told a completely different story than the *MGS* PlayStation game.



METAL GEAR SOLID 2

Debuted in: 2001
Set in: 2007, 2009
System: PlayStation 2
■ *Metal Gear Solid* set many standards in cinematic storytelling that may not be met in the videogame world for years to come. The game also pushed the boundaries of console graphics.
Fact: The plot twists in *MGS2* were so protected that Konami's own US offices didn't know them until just a couple of weeks before the game shipped.

■ **WHAT'S THE SCORE?:** The soundtrack for *MGS2* was written by British composer Harry Gregson-Williams, who also penned the *Shrek* score. But not that dreadfully catchy Smash Mouth/Eddie Murphy remake.

■ **SKATEBOARDING EXCLUSIVE:** We're hearing word out of Konami that the skateboarding levels in *Substance* may not make it to all versions of the game. Could this be another exclusive Xbox goodie? We can hope so.



Snake admires his brand new tuxedo, but wonders if there should also be a bikini outfit.

"Don't worry Emma... Snake is on the job. No more geeky pipsqueak doing a man's job. If you want a job done right, do it yourself."

METAL GEAR FUTURE

- **Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance** for the Xbox is right on schedule for a fall release.
- **Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance** for the PlayStation2 and PC could hit as late as mid-summer 2003.
- Hideo Kojima and Konami are currently exploring the possibilities of developing a **Metal Gear online** game in the future.
- Expect to see **Metal Gear Solid** titles hit at a more frequent rate. We could even see a new one every two years from here on out.



The VR missions also have the added benefit of excellent training.

Lesson 7

Push Gamers Beyond Their Limits

- **Who should be paying attention:** THE SIMS
- **Who has this lesson down:** HALO, GRAN TURISMO

As shown in *Substance*:

SUPER CHALLENGING EUROPEAN MODE

Konami didn't stop working on *Metal Gear Solid 2* after it released the title in the US. In fact, quite a few extras were added to game, such as a making of directory, trailers, and an artwork gallery. But the best added bonus was an incredibly hard European Extreme Mode. This special difficulty level was added on top of the Extreme difficulty mode that was in the US and Japanese versions, and it was so tough that even highly skilled players found it incredibly challenging.

Metal Gear Substance will also include this ultra-difficult mode, which means that you'll probably need to fight your way through all of the VR training missions if you hope to have any chance whatsoever at completing the main story in the European Extreme difficulty level. Good luck if you think you're up to the challenge.

CLOSER

Hideo Kojima describes *Metal Gear Substance* as the true form of *Metal Gear Solid 2*. And judging by all the extras, goodies, bonuses, and shocking surprises that he added into an already classic game, we have to applaud his efforts. We hope that other game developers take a look at what he's done and unleash the "true forms" of some of their great games. It's about time that videogame fans are treated to a little Substance.

BUFFALO WHAT?: Hideo Kojima is clearly influenced by *Escape From New York*, since adding Solid Snake to Buffalo Pliskin pretty clearly gives you Snake Plissken, hero of the John Carpenter movie.



EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT XBOX LIVE BUT WERE TOO COOL TO ASK...

If there's a question you have about Xbox Live, and it makes the slightest bit of sense, then you've come to the right place. This is Answer Central. Xbox Live itself is remarkably simple and intuitive, but the range of possibilities is endless, and so naturally, you'll have a lot of questions. We've broken it down into seven basic sections for ease of navigation, and pared it down to the simplest terms. So even if you don't know a thing about Xbox Live right this second, spend ten minutes with this feature and you'll be one of the leading experts in the free world.

COINCIDENCE? WE THINK NOT: This feature, not coincidentally, begins on page 42 of this magazine, and 42, as everyone knows, is the answer to the meaning of life. According to *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, anyway.

HELL IN A CELL: The Xbox Communicator headset sounds almost exactly like a cell phone, and can be flipped for use on either the left or right ear.

THE BASICS

WHAT IS XBOX LIVE?

Put simply, Xbox Live is a service from Microsoft that lets you play future games online, against friends and opponents from all over the world. But more than that, Xbox Live is a gigantic extension of your Xbox system's already-prodigious abilities that will open up downloadable content, persistent worlds, new levels, and the most revolutionary innovation in videogame history – the ability to communicate with remote players using the Xbox Communicator headset and microphone.



WHEN DOES IT ARRIVE?

Xbox Live will be available to the general public this fall. At time of going to press, however, the only firm date we'd heard was "well before Thanksgiving." A public beta (a trial that select members of the public get to participate in) will go live in July, but will feature only a couple of games.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Initially, Xbox Live will sell at retailers for $49.95, and this promotional price includes 12 months of Xbox Live service (you'll still need your own broadband service provider, of course), a free game, and a free Xbox Communicator headset.

WHERE DO I GET IT?

Xbox Live will be on sale in a retail package at any of the places you normally buy videogames or Xbox accessories. That means you can buy it at Electronics Boutique, Babbages, CompUSA, Amazon.com, Best Buy – basically anywhere you've seen games being sold. It comes in a nice little package containing the Xbox Communicator headset, Xbox Live software, a free version of *ReVolt* (an online-enabled version of Acclaim's cool RC racing game) to let you try it out immediately, and some other, unexpected goodies. And again, all for $49.95, including a whole year of Xbox Live service!

WHO CAN I PLAY AGAINST?

You can play against anyone, anywhere in the world. You can have Xbox Live find the closest, fastest game, or choose from a list of friends – the service will indicate if they're online or not. You can even customize the types of game and players you want to try, using a feature called OptiMatch. That means that if you only want to see a list of low-skill-level Deathmatch *Unreal Championship* games in your local neighborhood, that's all you'll see on the list. You can tailor OptiMatch to suit your needs. Quick Match lets you simply stab the A button 'til you're spewed into the closest open game.

Master Chief points to the new Tiger Tank.

WHAT GAMES WILL BE AVAILABLE?

A huge variety of games will be available almost immediately after the system launches. At least twelve new games in the first twelve weeks of service, is the plan. These run the gamut from frenetic first-person shooter to epic RPGs. Sports, driving, puzzle, and every other genre you can think of will all be on the menu. On the next few pages is a sample of what's to come. In total, at least 50 Xbox Live games will come out by the end of 2003. Life is sweet indeed.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON

Squad-based combat the way it should be played... online and complete with voice communication. This is already an excellent PC game, and the stability of hardware and servers plus the inclusion of voice will make it shine on Xbox Live.



MECHASSAULT

What's better than controlling a giant robot that can destroy anything in its path? How about online play that pits your giant robot against giant robots from all over the world? We can't wait to take our marauding mech of destruction into battle against other, lesser, mechs.

MIDTOWN MADNESS 3

This gorgeous racer should be completely out of control online... better upgrade your insurance now. Smash your way through the stunning streets of Paris against a Frenchie. Or careen around the corners in Washington DC against some spoiled Senator's kid.

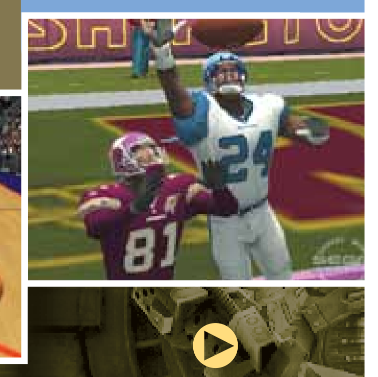


NBA 2K3

The top Xbox basketball franchise gets even better with online support that's been fine-tuned from years on the Dreamcast. Just imagine lacing 'em up in a custom league or hook up with a few friends for a REAL 5-on-5 tournament. This isn't a reality – yet – but at the very least you can go head-to-head and track your rankings.

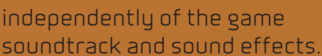
NFL 2K3

Visual Concepts did online console football first... now we get to see what they can do with a broadband network and a hefty piece of hardware to play with.



COMMUNICATE OR DIE: While playing *Unreal Championship* on Xbox Live, we were able to ask a fellow deathmatcher what the alternate fire button was. He responded by killing us and calling us suckers.

THE COMMUNICATOR



WHAT'S THE XBOX COMMUNICATOR?
It's a very cool-looking single-ear headphone and microphone headset, with that nice silicone rubber that doesn't chafe. It looks like it's from the future, plugs into your Xbox controller (the topmost memory card slot), and lets you talk live to anyone you're playing a game against (or with) on Xbox Live. On the little cart part that goes into your controller is a bijou volume control dial and a MUTE button. The whole set-up weighs only a couple of ounces and operates independently of the game soundtrack and sound effects.

WHAT DOES THE COMMUNICATOR SOUND LIKE?
In our test (and we're told it's getting even better) it sounded as good as, if not better than a digital cell phone. And it didn't interfere at all with the sound coming from the TV. They were very complementary.

WHAT'S VOICE MASKING?
Voice masking is the ability to digitally disguise your voice. Choosing a "style" of voice from a menu (anything from killer robot to little baby) will digitally modulate your voice, so that other players hear a tweaked but clear voice. It's fun and helps privacy-minded individuals retain more anonymity.

HOW DOES MUTING WORK?
If you don't like how someone is talking to you, or you're a parent worried about your children communicating with strangers online, it's possible to MUTE other players. They can talk away with abandon, but you won't hear them again until you "forgive" them by reactivating them in your preferences. You can target individual players for muting, or you can go all Marlee Matlin and deactivate all conversation and pretend you are fragging people in a monastery.

ENVIRONMENT AND EXTRAS

HOW COMPLICATED IS XBOX LIVE?
About as complicated as cable TV. That is to say, not complicated at all. When you first sign up for Xbox Live (after buying it from a store) you'll have to enter a credit card number and some basic info to build your identity (using an onscreen virtual keyboard), but that's really about it. It's a one-time process. After that, all the "interface" stuff will look just like the regular game interfaces. That means that Xbox Live on *Unreal Championship* will look like *Unreal Championship* and Xbox Live on *NFL Fever* will look like *NFL Fever*. It's just another selection screen, albeit one that leads to an incredible new world of gameplay.

CAN I SEND EMAIL?
Nope, Xbox Live is for games. Games! Besides, why send email when you can actually voice-chat live?

CAN I SURF THE NET?
Nope. There will be cool features in the Xbox Live universe, including places to find out cheats, check other player's rankings, and even find out about new games, but you will NOT use this as a browser. You see, that's what your browser is for…

IDENTITY AND SECURITY

HOW DO I CHOOSE MY IDENTITY?
When you sign up for service, you'll be given the option to name yourself, and this "Gamertag" will stick with you for as long as you're subscribed to Xbox Live. That said, you can change the name that appears on screen to other players, at almost any time, using in-game software, should that game permit it. So expect to see a lot of players out there named DeAtHkiLlaZ and XboxRoxX. Luckily you'll still be able to tell them all apart using their unique ID.

WHAT KIND OF STATS WILL IT TRACK?
There's no limit to the kinds or amount of facts that Xbox Live can store about a player. If you want to build a reputation, go right ahead. Xbox Live can show your stats in kills, races, fights, and just about anything else you'd ever want to know. This alone is truly going to take competitive gaming to another level and expect the **Official Xbox Magazine** to be involved heavily in pushing this with a whole new set of challenges and competitions.

CAN I TAKE XBOX LIVE WITH ME?
Yes! Your Xbox Live account can "live" on any memory card, so you can take it to a pal's house, and if he has a broadband connection and an Xbox, boom! You can go online, even if he or she doesn't have an Xbox Live account. Although they'll probably want one after seeing what's possible…hey wait a minute, that's probably how they get you!

IS MY INFORMATION SECURE?
Yes. No credit card or address info is stored on your Xbox or your memory card. All the secret stuff is encrypted and stored securely on Microsoft's custom servers. It's basically bulletproof and uses military strength security protocols.

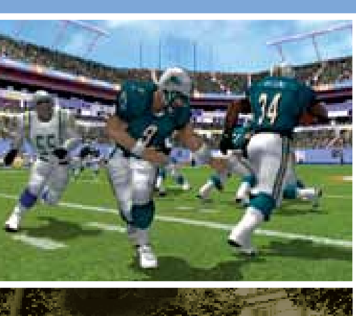
WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE XBOX LIVE?
Xbox Live-compatible games will always work fine for single player fun, so just because the game features the Xbox Live logo (it will be displayed prominently on compatible software boxes), doesn't mean you can't enjoy it on your own, or even in split-screen. Xbox Live games will all work online and offline. So for example, *NFL Fever 2003* will work as a single-player game, as an online game, or as a multiplayer game with four joypads plugged in. Perfectly simple!

■ *MechAssault* features CTF, Deathmatch, King of the Hill… you name it.

■ *Unreal Championship* features cool new characters, as well as amazing game modes.

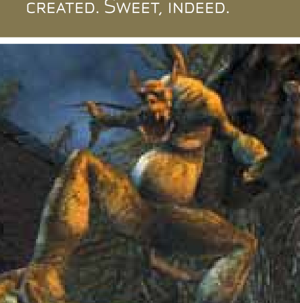
NFL FEVER 2003

We've played it. It rocks. Talk trash or strategize with or against players from San Francisco to Maine. Stunning graphics and lag-free response. Just keep the talk to a minimum in the huddle!



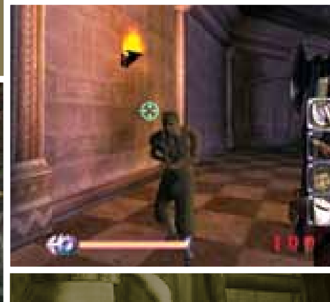
PROJECT EGO (CODE NAME)

Even if you don't fully know what Peter Molyneux has up his sleeve with Project Ego, you can bet that the maker of Black & White, Populous, and Dungeon Keeper is going to make this game great. The hard-drive allows you to continually play in the world that you've built, scarred, and created. Sweet, indeed.



SHAYDE: MONSTERS VS. HUMANS

Those monsters and humans are always fussin' and feudin', so maybe we can finally get the whole thing settled by playing this out online. Luckily for us humans, the broadband adoption for monsters is quite low.



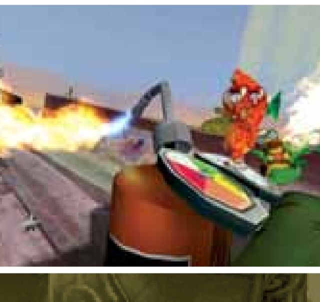
UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Shoot bad guys, drive vehicles, conquer alien worlds. It's not Halo next, but it is something almost as exciting – the ultimate Unreal. Online, and out of control. We played this at E3 and the lag-free thing meant instant uninstall of Unreal Tournament on our PCs. It's that good!



WHACKED!

Microsoft's high-energy fighting game should be even more chaotic once Xbox Live is up and running. After all, whacking people you don't know is always more fun.



XIII

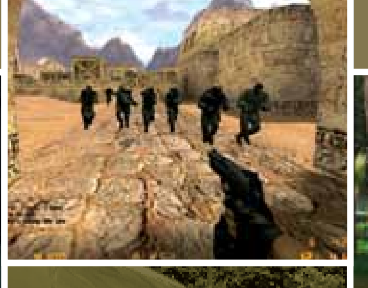
This cel-shaded first-person shooter should test your skills at killing cartoon enemies even when they're controlled by real people.



COUNTERSTRIKE

The wildly popular (and insanely fun) Half-Life mod is easily one of the most anticipated Xbox Live games to hit shelves... we are absolutely dying to see it.


PC SCREEN



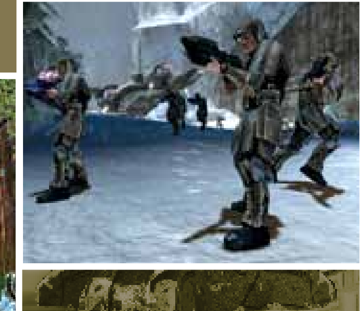
DOMINION

Think the classic hack, slash, level-up addictiveness of Diablo with a better 3D graphics engine and some great multiplayer gameplay via Xbox Live. Doesn't sound so bad, now does it?

THE NEXT HALO

Everybody's favorite Xbox game is getting a sequel and Microsoft has confirmed that it is going to be online. Halo creator Jason Jones says: "We finally get to make Halo the online experience we wanted from the beginning." (Insert drool here)

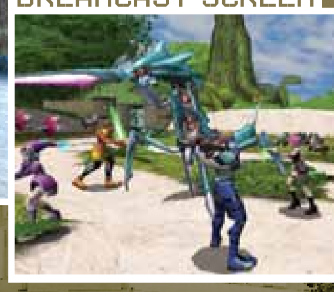




PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

Sega's near-mythical RPG is ramped and vamped for Xbox Live. Voice communication will forever alter the way you play this party-based adventure classic. The only fear is that it could possibly take over your life... that's not so bad.

DREAMCAST SCREEN



■ **LAG-TASTIC:** Bizarrely, the more Xbox Live players there are, the less lag there will be, since games can be picked by geographic proximity, which will usually speed things up.

■ **DOWNLOADS ON THE DOWNLOW:** Microsoft is promising to start off Xbox Live with some cool new downloadable content, planned as a surprise. Even we don't know what's coming.

WHAT ABOUT BROADBAND?

Well, this is a relatively new term, but one definition we like is Princeton University's WordNet's:

> **BROADBAND**
> adj 1: of or relating to or being a communications network in which the bandwidth can be divided and shared by multiple simultaneous signals (as for voice or data or video)
> 2: responding to or operating at a wide band of frequencies; "a broadband antenna" [syn: wideband]
>
> Source: WordNet ® 1.6, © 1997 Princeton University

That pretty much describes what's possible, but it doesn't really define speed. That's in part because there's no lower or upper speed limitation on the rate of data transfer that defines broadband. If there is a basement, then we'd have to say it was anything faster than 56Kbps, the alleged speed of a modern modem – but even that's disingenuous. In a normal household, a "56K" modem would be lucky to reach speeds in excess of 28Kbps, thanks to deliberate bandwidth restrictions, old telephone lines, and even radio interference from the fridge (seriously).

Xbox Live, in order to function properly, is looking for up/download speeds of something in the relatively modest area of 64Kbps. It'll take advantage of faster networks, but that's really all it needs for high performance. Clever server technology will also help compensate for sudden drops in performance (cable modem owners know what we're talking about).

Microsoft estimates that while 15% of average US households have broadband access, Xbox owners are much more likely to have broadband, with as many as 35% of existing Xbox players hooked up to a fast connection. Weirdly, Halo players are even more switched on, with as many as 50% connected.

WHAT HARDWARE WILL I NEED

You'll need an Xbox (well, duh!), a cable or DSL modem, and a connector cable. If your home broadband system goes through a hub or router, all you'll need is a regular CAT 5 Ethernet cable. If you're going to plug your Xbox directly into the broadband modem, you'll use a crossover Ethernet cable, or an Xbox System Link cable.

MY XBOX IS STUCK IN THE FAMILY ROOM! WHAT NOW?

Well there are a couple of really easy solutions for the geographically challenged. The easiest is a big old length of Ethernet cable. It's easily available at almost any length from stores like CompUSA or Fry's Electronics. You can even get it cut to length, like lumber! If mom (or anyone else) objects to you running 300 feet of cable through the house to the office, then you could look at using a wireless hub, since a number of companies are planning simple wireless adapters that will work with Xbox. Check out www.linksys.com for some options. Performance does decrease with distance and through walls or floors and cable will give the best results.

DOES MICROSOFT *REALLY* BELIEVE IN XBOX LIVE?

You better believe it. The big M is going to spend $2 billion dollars (you read that right, BILLION) over the next several years to make sure that Xbox Live is a success and that the next Xbox is even better.

DO GAME PUBLISHERS BELIEVE IN XBOX LIVE?

Yep, 60 different companies are working on Xbox live games right now.

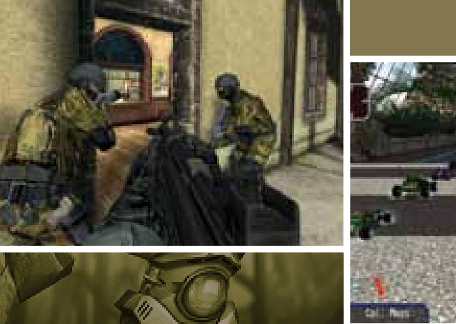
WHAT ARE THE OTHER GUYS DOING?

Nintendo and Sony aren't standing still, but they do have an uphill struggle ahead of them. Both companies plan on offering a 56K modem option as well as a broadband modem, but neither has the facility built-in, and neither has a hard drive. Sony plans on releasing a hard drive add-on, but at time of going to press, that plan was pretty confusing. Add to that the historically miserable adoption rate of any peripheral other than a new controller or memory card, and it looks like they may simply sit this generation out.

RAINBOW SIX III: RAVEN SHIELD

This should hit near the end of the year, but judging by this series' fine history, it will be worth the wait and perfect for the Xbox Communicator.

PC SCREEN



REVOLT

Acclaim's classic RC Racing game is back, and all tweaked for online action. Glossy graphics, tons of options and the price is right – it's free with Xbox Live! Can't go wrong with free, now can you?

PC SCREEN



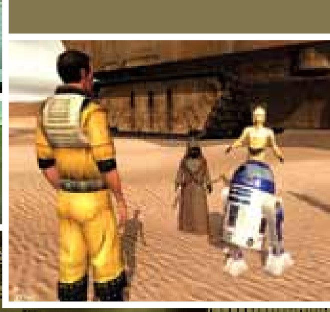
LAMBORGHINI

We have a preview (page 64) of this fabulous-looking racing sim that lets you race and chase online 'til your heart's content. The fact that it features some of the world's most exotic autos doesn't hurt, either.



STAR WARS GALAXIES

It's set in the Star Wars universe and it's made by the guys who brought us EverQuest. You can be a Jawa, a droid, a Jedi, the guy with four heads in the Cantina band, or a weirdly erotic dancer. All told, this has all the makings of the best (and possibly, weirdest) online RPG Ever.



SEQUELS

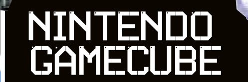
Also supporting online play will be follow-ups to **Project Gotham Racing, Amped,** and **Rallisport Challenge.**



US VERSUS THE OTHER GUYS

HOW THE ONLINE COMPETITION STACKS UP





	XBOX LIVE	SONY PLAYSTATION 2	NINTENDO GAMECUBE
HARDWARE			
BUILT-IN ETHERNET PORT	YES	NO—ADD-ON $40	NO—ADD-ON $35
BUILT-IN HARD DISK	YES	NO—ADD-ON TBD (LIKELY $100)	NO—ADD-ON TBD
SERVICE APPROACH			
ONE UNIQUE IDENTITY	YES	NO	TBD
ACCOUNT PROTECTION	ONE PASSWORD ALL GAMES	DIFFERENT PASSWORDS FOR EACH GAME	TBD
LOCATION OF DATACENTERS	SEATTLE (2), LONDON, TOKYO	VARIES BY PUBLISHER, BB PROVIDER	TBD
CONNECTION	BROADBAND	BROADBAND OR 56K MODEM	BB OR MODEM
SECURITY ENCRYPTION	MILITARY GRADE	TBD	TBD
NO. OF CREDIT CARD ENTRIES	ONE	ONE FOR EACH PUBLISHER	TBD
STANDARD FEATURES			
WORLDWIDE FIND FRIENDS	YES	VARIES BY PUBLISHER	TBD
WORLDWIDE MATCHMAKING	YES	YES	TBD
VOICE PERIPHERAL SUPPORT	YES	VARIES BY PUBLISHER	NO
SINGLE GAMER TAG	YES	NO	TBD
FRIENDS			
SINGLE LIST FOR ALL GAMES	YES	NO	TBD
CROSS-TITLE PRESENCE	YES	NO	TBD
SEE WHEN FRIENDS ARE ONLINE	YES	NO	TBD
SEE WHAT THEY ARE PLAYING	YES	NO	TBD
INVITE FRIENDS TO YOUR GAME	YES	NO	TBD
FIND AND JOIN YOUR FRIENDS	YES	NO	TBD
CREATE A FRIENDS-ONLY GAME	YES	NO	TBD
VOICE			
HEADSET	YES	YES	TBD
VOICE IN ALL GAMES	YES	NO	TBD
VOICE MASKING	YES	NO	TBD
NO. OF HEADSET OUTLETS	FOUR – PLUGS INTO CONTROLLER	ONE – PLUGS INTO CONTROLLER PORT	TBD
VOICE COMMANDS	YES	YES	TBD
MUTING	YES, FOREVER IF DESIRED	YES, SINGLE GAME ONLY	TBD
PARENTAL DISABLING	YES	NO	TBD
BAN ANNOYING PLAYERS	SYSTEM-WIDE	NO	TBD
MATCHMAKING			
SEARCH BASED ON SKILL	YES	YES	TBD
SEARCH FOR YOUR FRIENDS	YES	NO	TBD
GEOGRAPHICALLY CLOSE MATCHES	YES	NO	TBD
GLOBAL RANKINGS			
ONE IDENTITY FOR ALL RANKINGS	YES	NO	TBD
RANKING AGAINST FRIENDS	YES	NO	TBD
CLANS	GAME-SPECIFIC	GAME-SPECIFIC	TBD
CONTENT DOWNLOADS			
PREMIUM CONTENT	YES	YES – HDD PERIPHERAL REQUIRED	TBD
PRICE			
	INITIAL STARTER KIT: $49.95 FOR ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION AND AN XBOX COMMUNICATOR. SERVICE IS VALUED AT $9.95/MO.	GAME-BY-GAME PRICING WITH COSTS FOR ADD-ON PERIPHERALS	GAME-BY-GAME PRICING WITH COSTS FOR ADD-ON PERIPHERALS
LAUNCH DATES			
	NORTH AMERICA, JAPAN, SELECT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES FALL 2002	MARCH IN JAPAN AUGUST IN NORTH AMERICA	TBD
PARTNER SUPPORT			
	60 GAME COMPANIES WORKING ON XBOX LIVE GAMES	ELECTRONIC ARTS	TBD
LAUNCH TITLES			
	UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP (INFOGRAMES) MECHASSAULT (MICROSOFT) WHACKED (MICROSOFT) NFL FEVER 2003 (MICROSOFT) PHANTASY STAR ONLINE (SEGA)	SOCOM IN NORTH AMERICA MADDEN FOOTBALL IN NORTH AMERICA FFXI IN JAPAN	PHANTASY STAR ONLINE I & II
ONLINE TITLES BY HOLIDAY 2003			
	50	TBD	TBD

■ **LOOK FOR THE LOGO:** Xbox Live-compatible games will feature the Xbox Live logo prominently on the box, but will otherwise look and play like normal games until they detect the online connection.

■ **HALO 1.5 DOES NOT EXIST:** The next *Halo* game will be a true sequel, with online functionality and a brand-new adventure. Please continue breathing.

Scouting the FOOTBALL Giants

Inside the secret playbooks of 2003's biggest gridiron games

Football has long been the one sport that stands head and shoulders above other sports in the videogame world. Even though it is far more complex than the other majors (basketball, baseball, and hockey), the sport has become the best represented sport in videogames year in and year out. This is even *more* true when it comes to the Xbox. There is not a clear leader in terms of quality amongst the top three Xbox football games, but all are excellent. Last year, we scored them just two-tenths of a point apart on our ten-point scale. The difference between the top grade (*NFL Fever 2002*) and the third-place ranking (*NFL 2K2*) was so close it was almost a dead heat. Once again, this year, the competition is completely up for grabs.

Which leads us to 2003… the year when Xbox football finally comes of age. Thanks to Xbox Live (two of the three big games offer online gameplay), intense competition, and an across-the-board effort to improve franchise play, all three football series are improving greatly. So we went undercover and stole the secret playbooks of some of the biggest football games in the works for the Xbox. Here is what we found.

■ The gameplay in *Madden 2003* has been sped up from last year's version, so expect the running game to be even better.



■ Watch for some new instant replay camera angles after big plays.



■ You'll see plenty of gang tackles this year, but gang fights are out.



■ In response to absolutely no demand: It's Zach Thomas' butt!

Inside the secret playbook of MADDEN 2003

Developer: TIBURON
Publisher: EA

Without the *Madden* franchise, football games just wouldn't be where they are today. This franchise flourished in the early days of 16-bit consoles and has evolved to take advantage of the mighty technology of the Xbox – and it didn't skip a beat the entire way. So it's no wonder that Tiburon is shooting for one thing this year: volume.

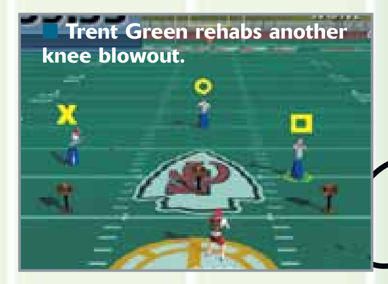
When we say volume, we mean adding more modes to the most option-packed game on the market. The most impressive of these additions is the new Mini-Camp mode. This set of mini-games (obviously inspired by *Virtua Tennis*) lets players build their control skills in a variety of challenges such as precision passing, pass rushing, pursuit, and coffin-corner kicking. After playing through increasingly difficult skill levels, players can even open up real game situations that test newly learned abilities. Tuned correctly, this could add significant replay value to the game.

In terms of general gameplay, the first thing you'll notice is that *Madden* plays faster than before. You'll also notice that the control is tighter and the momentum (which was waaayy overdone in previous *Maddens*) has been toned down a notch or two. In terms of graphics, new animations have been added and you can expect even more of the cool cinematic replays that make this series so visually appealing.

Sound had been a major weakness for the *Madden* series ever since *NFL 2K* raised the bar for in-game commentary. However, this year the franchise takes a major leap forward, jettisoning the lethargic Pat Summerall in favor of one of the best play-by-play guys in the business, Al Michaels. Not only is the new voice talent a welcome change, but Tiburon has also improved its commentary with *NFL 2K*-like situational analysis.

And let's not forget the Franchise mode. Last year's version was one of the deepest we've ever played, and this year's looks even better. The most noticeable improvement is in the way you draft and train rookies. Before the season starts, you'll need to allocate resources to scout as many rookies as possible so you can go into the draft with actual knowledge (instead of the usual skill ratings sheet). Plus, once you draft your players, you can decide how much playing time they'll get during four preseason games. Manage your players correctly and you'll see their skills improve before the season starts… do it wrong and you'll ruin a promising draft pick or two.

Extra goodies include an expanded Football 101 mode and a deep create-a-play engine that lets you make any play your imagination may conjure. The only thing missing is online play. EA went with Sony's $40 peripheral online strategy and won't be supporting Xbox Live. It's a shame, too, because we would have loved to play this one against friends.

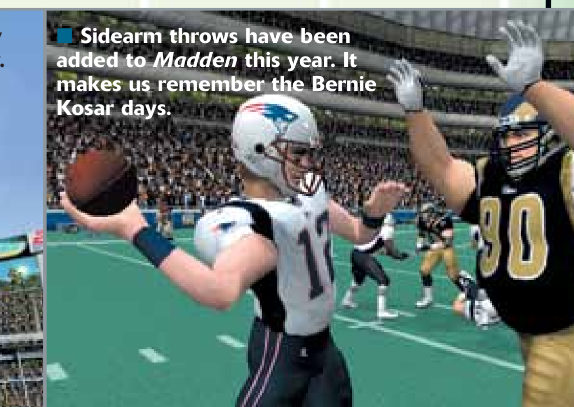


Trent Green rehabs another knee blowout.



■ Marshall Faulk: EA's 2003 cover boy.

■ Don't worry, lens flare won't affect the gameplay at all. It's just used to make screenshots look pretty.



■ Sidearm throws have been added to *Madden* this year. It makes us remember the Bernie Kosar days.

■ **VIDEOGAME FOOTBALL YELLOW FLAG #1:** Your opponent sneaks a peek at your screen while you're calling plays. The Penalty – 10 yards and cardboard blinders taped to his face for the remainder of the game.

■ **YELLOW FLAG #2:** Money play abuse. The Penalty – 15 yards and being forced to use the "coach's choice" play for the rest of the game.



Dream features

Manager mode
We love playing the games, but now that Franchise modes are so detailed and realistic, we'd love to have an even deeper management mode so we could finally have our own championship manager. Some of us have lost our gameplayin' skills and fancy ourselves great football minds, not bodies.

In-game highlights
In the early days of *Madden*, they actually pulled this off thanks to the quick-loading cartridges. However, we'd still love it if someone could figure a way to break into games during season and Franchise mode with big plays that might be happening elsewhere in the league. *NFL 2K3* is getting real close on this one.

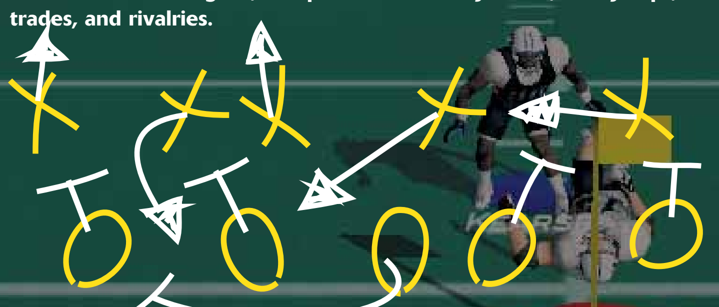
Highlight commentary
Last year, *NFL Fever* showed us that post-game highlights were possible… and really cool. Now we'd like to see some post-game analysis of those plays. We love that kind of stuff – that's why we watch *Primetime* every Sunday after football (and again at 1 a.m., but we admit that we have issues).

Weekly content updates
It's no fun to have your team stuffed with guys that got cut during the off-season. With online support in most of these games, roster upgrades and weekly real-life scenarios would be just the ticket. *Fever* promises something similar with *2003* – we can't wait.

Season analysis
Playing through a season of Franchise mode would be even better if the game could analyze the season so far, just like the weekly football shows. Everyone knows that the pre-game shows are sometimes more entertaining than the actual game.

Game training
So do you really know how to read coverages, call the right defense, or prepare a solid gameplan? Don't worry if you don't, because even hardcore football fans are confused by the complex strategy of football. Maybe it's time a game teaches us all how to be better coaches… and players.

Online Franchise mode
Now that Xbox Live is up, we can't wait to play these football games over the Internet. But we'd also love to someday play in online franchise leagues, complete with fantasy drafts, salary caps, trades, and rivalries.



Inside the playbook of NFL FEVER 2003

Developer: **MICROSOFT**
Publisher: **MICROSOFT**



The inside running game has been amped up, so expect big runs.

Last year, Microsoft's first-party development team shocked the sports gaming world with *NFL Fever 2002*. Few expected that a game from first-time console sports developers would end up being the best-looking and, in the opinion of some (including this magazine), the most enjoyable football game of that year. There are two key elements to Microsoft's strategy: polish and online play.

In terms of polish, *Fever* has gone through quite a few changes, the greatest number of which show up in gameplay. Most importantly, the pass defense is much improved over last year. Many of the defensive backfield blunders have been ironed out, and you'll find it a lot tougher to beat the safeties this year. Plus, the secondary finally will play a little bump-and-run defense, and the backs are much smarter when it comes to zone defense. Other gameplay additions include more audibles and more realistic tackle-breaking (especially for the big Jerome Bettis types).

Another area that needed polish last year was the game's presentation. Thankfully, that's getting quite an overhaul. First of all, the replays are much improved and more realistic. Secondly, the audio should be more intense and more suitable for a videogame now that a new play-by-play guy has been brought in. His commentary is more action-oriented, more off-the-wall, and simply more fun. You'll also notice a bit of an improvement over last year's stellar graphics… mainly in the lighting.

Even the Franchise mode is getting the polish treatment. We loved last year's dynamic player-performance feature that let you watch your players improve or get worse on a game-to-game basis. This feature is back and has been tuned to be even more accessible, popping up to remind you which players have advanced or declined the most after each game. The whole mode has been tuned to be more realistic, and a very, very cool surprise awaits those who win the Super Bowl.

Another cool surprise is the play editor. This amazing tool enables you to create your own plays and immediately watch the computer simulate how they work in action using the in-game graphics.

All this polish is great, but let's not forget the other important attraction of this game – online play. *NFL Fever* is one of Microsoft's tent-pole games designed to show off exactly what Xbox Live can do. That means that not only will you be able to match up and play against friends and strangers, but you'll also be able to talk freely with them the entire time via the Xbox Communicator.

We've already played this game online, and it was awesome. We can't wait to take a crack at this when Xbox Live is up and running. Microsoft also promises that there will be plenty of uploads for roster updates and other goodies. Finally, you won't have to play December games with players that were cut in the second week of August. All in all, it looks as if Microsoft has listened to the complaints that gamers had against the first game, fixed those errors, polished the gameplay, and added an online mode. Seems like a pretty darn good strategy to us.

The level of detail in *Fever* just keeps getting better and better. It's the only football title built especially for the Xbox… and it shows.

Forget about exploiting the AI safeties. They're much smarter this time around.



The smoother replay mode is a welcome improvement over last year.



At moments like these, you'll be glad you're not a running back.

The College Ranks

NCAA Football 2003

Developer: **TIBURON**
Publisher: **EA**



Is it a little early to start doing the Heisman pose?

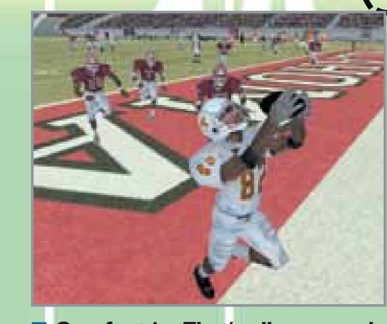
Although often overshadowed by its big brother *Madden*, *NCAA Football* is a franchise many hardcore football gamers hold dear to their heart. This year's version should win even more fans. While most of the visual and gameplay improvements are similar to those in *Madden*, several NCAA-only improvements made us stand up and take notice.

For starters, the Franchise mode (which we like better than any pro football Franchise mode) has been made even more impressive. Now, as coach of your own college team, you can create your own schedules, fight for notoriety on TV, and even recruit freshmen via a scary-deep scouting feature. It's good enough to play strictly as an athletic director.

Other cool additions include mascot teams, improved commentary, special rivalries (with their specific trophies), new plays and formations, and an interface that remembers your favorite team so you don't have to search for it each time you play. It's good enough that you don't even need to be a college football fan to enjoy what this game has to offer.



Joey Harrington is off to the pros, but #9 looks to fill his shoes.



One foot in. That's all you need for a touchdown in college.

YELLOW FLAG #3: Abuse of kick defenses. The Penalty – 5 yards and the repeated humiliation of getting beat repeatedly by the long pass play.

YELLOW FLAG #4: Punting on 4th and less than 7. The Penalty – 5 yards and being forced to try for two after every touchdown.


The smoothest animations in football are back, and they're better than ever.


Angie Harmon's cheering somewhere.

Classic uniforms, new stadiums.


New handoff animations stand out.

Smartest defensive AI? You bet.


Bootleg and you're golden.

Check out the detail on the helmets.

Inside the playbook of NFL 2K3

Developer: VISUAL CONCEPTS
Publisher: SEGA

In the past three years, no sports developer has been as forward-looking as the team behind the *NFL 2K3* franchise. While other football series were busy polishing, Visual Concepts revolutionized the presentation of its gridiron game. It dropped TV commentators for paid voice actors who could spend more time recording situational play-by-play, and last year the developer turned replays into gameplay analysis moments that seemed so true to life, you forgot that real people weren't calling the game.

This year, Visual Concepts is aggressively pushing the envelope again. The company continues to push, push, push in every area of the game design. Plus, the series has added a huge name to its game… but we'll get to that later.

In terms of gameplay, the developers are trying to make this the most realistically animated football game of all time. For starters, you'll notice that the context-sensitive moves (for instance, big spins in the open fields, and tighter moves near the line) from last year have been expanded, making every tackle and broken tackle look less scripted than ever before. You'll also see a lot more blocking animations in this game than you'll see elsewhere. It's little things like this that make a videogame fool people into thinking it's a TV broadcast.

Other improvements include hot routes for both offense and defense, play books that are based on the actual plays that each team uses during the year, and the ironing out of last year's AI gaffes (like time management in late game situations). And thanks to the memory and hard drive of the Xbox, this game will have more animations than the other console versions of *NFL 2K3*.

You can also expect that *NFL 2K3*'s already brilliant commentary and replay engine will be even more realistic and much deeper than last year. And now that the series has the ESPN license (see, we told you we'd get to this later), you may even see highlight shows each week as you play through a season, which would be a football fan's dream come true. But that's not where the ESPN license ends. The visual look of the TV network has completely taken over the interface of *NFL 2K3*. It sometimes looks like you're playing *SportsCenter*… but without all the obscure pop culture references.

And we simply can't talk about *NFL 2K3* without mentioning online gaming. After all, it was the Visual Concepts team that proved that console sports games could work over a modem on the Dreamcast. Imagine what these guys will be able to do with the broadband Xbox Live network.

Although they are staying tight-lipped, it's safe to assume that all the good stuff from the DC versions will be back and better than ever this time around.

Last but certainly not least is one of the biggest improvements of all for *NFL 2K3* – the Franchise mode. Since its inception, Franchise mode has been the weak link of this series. But thanks to a total overhaul, this feature could become one of the title's major strengths. Visual Concepts realized that fewer than 10 percent of gamers even bother with the Franchise mode… but rather than simply ignoring it, the developer paid even *more* attention to Franchise in an attempt to make it more accessible to the other 90 percent. Although the company doesn't want to tip its hand early, don't expect to see the same old Franchise mode. This one should be different visually and strategically from anything you've played (or not played) before.

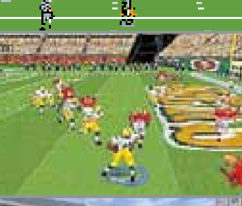

NFL 2K3 **has the best-looking blocking of any football game.**

Great moments in console football


Football
ATARI 2600 – 1978
The players looked like space invaders and it didn't follow many of the rules of football, but it was a start.


NFL Football
INTELLIVISION – 1979
Football players finally grow arms and legs, and finally follow some of the rules of football… but not many of them.


Super Action Football
COLECOVISION – 1983
Introduced us to pseudo-3D graphics, multi-colored player models, and in-game referees.


Tecmo Bowl
NES – 1989
Brought us real NFL players and legendary gameplay… but only four plays to choose from.


John Madden Football
GENESIS – 1990
The Legend Begins.


John Madden Football '94
1993
Perhaps the pinnacle of 2D football gaming.


NFL Gameday '98
1997
The very first polygonal (at least that was playable) football game.


NFL 2k
1999
Football in 3D finally comes of age.

NFL 2k1
2000
Sega introduces online gameplay to console football fans.


NFL Fever 2002
2001
The Xbox is born, and a new console franchise is instantly made popular.

The College Ranks

NCAA Football 2K3

Developer: VISUAL CONCEPTS
Publisher: SEGA

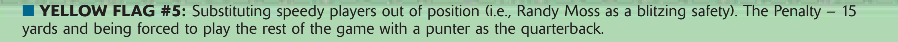
Somebody's getting a spirit sticker for their helmet, and it isn't South Carolina's Phil Petty, #14.

Not to be outdone by the competition, Visual Concepts is preparing an Xbox college football game of its own this year, and it's greatly improved over last year's Dreamcast version. For instance, the game's many animations have been improved, including cool moves in the option and other trick plays. The player models have been improved as well… if you look closely enough, you can even spot tiny helmet decals and realistic facial animations.

Like *NFL 2K3*, this title will also include a much more detailed Franchise mode (called the Legacy mode in *2K3*). This mode will enable you to improve players during spring training, recruit high school grads, and compare your record to the great coaches of the past and present. And if you're good enough, you'll get a bid via the BCS standings to play in a major bowl game.

Best of all, *NCAA College Football 2K3* will support online play via Xbox Live. Finally, Mazin' Blue Ann Arbor faithful can log on and take out their hated Buckeye rivals from Columbus. And all from the relative comfort of their dorm. I smell a league…


None of these athletes are being paid to play… wink wink.


YELLOW FLAG #5: Substituting speedy players out of position (i.e., Randy Moss as a blitzing safety). The Penalty – 15 yards and being forced to play the rest of the game with a punter as the quarterback.

YELLOW FLAG #6: The cheap disconnect when losing. The Penalty – 15 yards and loss of Xbox Live privileges for two months – and a severe pimp-slapping.



Ein, zwei, drei, azel... orta!



Panzer Dragoon Orta

■ As always, you can shoot directly – or, as shown here, unleash a flurry of homing blasts after locking onto enemies.

Dragons are in, dinosaurs are out. Flame on!

Eons ago, dragons ruled the skies. Wise, majestic, and deadly, they soared proudly (and seemingly untouchably) in clear blue heavens, yet lived in harmony with the humans below. Now this once-glorious world is on the brink of ruin, thanks to mankind.

The planet is scarred by millennia of countless battles, and the population teeters on the edge of extinction. A cruel empire wields this devastation to its advantage and squeezes the last life of man in its crushing grip. Dude, this totally sucks, which is why you're going to get on a dragon and blast your way to freedom.

First things first. It will come as no surprise to *Panzer* fans to find out that this is a rail-based shooter. There will be multiple paths and a great deal of flying freedom, but you will always be guided to a logical level end. And these levels will probably destroy your fragile mind with their unholy magnificence. Graphics have seldom, if ever, looked this good. The worlds are huge and the draw distances seemingly unlimited. You can gaze at a distant horizon without fear of spotting pop-in. The worlds are simply rendered as far as the eye can see. The particle and weather effects are stupendous. You can soar through a driving rain, or flinch as you head into a howling dust storm. It's not just atmosphere, either... it actually makes some levels harder than others.

The epic battles also bring out graphical greatness. The dragon you ride blasts out flame, plasma, and other bright and deadly projectiles. Berserk mode lets you use smart-bomb-style attacks to massive incendiary effect. And that's not your only weapon – the dragon you ride can morph in real time, adopting new forms that affect its "handling" and abilities. This certainly isn't your father's dragon.

Level design is incredibly varied. You could be tightly weaving through a huge scaffolding of moldering bones or dashing down a canyon at incredible speeds. The goal and play style of each level varies according to plot twists, which are all played out using cinematics that would make Namco proud. The between-level CGI is one of the game's many highlights.

And if playing the hero gets old, there are unlockable side quests that let you see the action from the evil point of view. Naturally, these have to be unlocked by completing the game in its various difficulty levels. Add to that the ability to gather virtual *Panzer* memorabilia in a cool "gallery" mode and you have an awful lot of extras to uncover and a gigantic quest ahead of you. Go dragons, go dragoons!

– Frank O'Connor

Only on Xbox

This was developed from the ground up for Xbox. If *Panzer* appears on any other console, it will be in a different form. This kind of exclusivity arrangement is becoming more and more common as the hardware companies start baring their teeth in the console battle.

TRACK RECORD

DEVELOPER: **Smilebit** PUBLISHER: **Sega** RELEASE DATE: **Fall 2002**

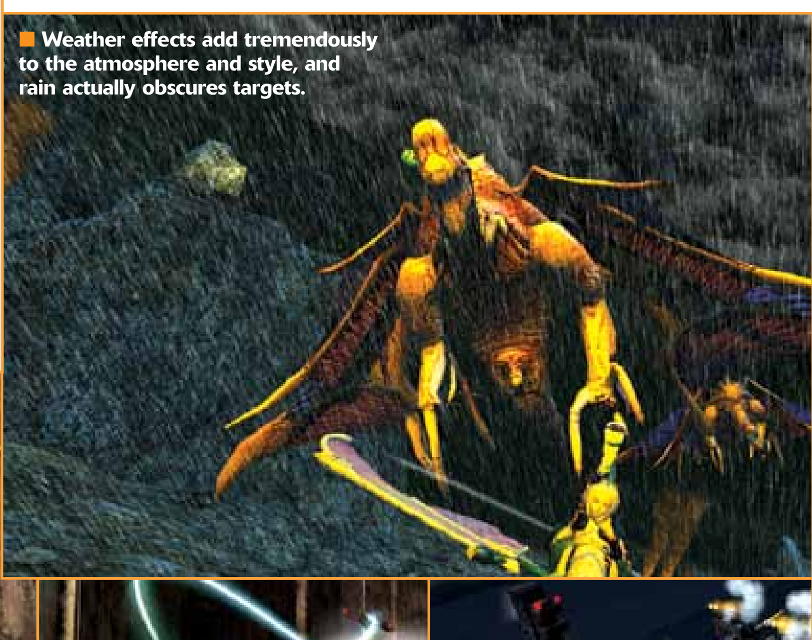
WHO ARE THEY?: If you like *Gunvalkyrie, Jet Set Radio, Typing of the Dead*, or any of the other stunningly original software this team provides, then you're probably a giant Sega freak. Which is okay, because that means you're mostly playing very high-quality software. But we have to say – after this, Smilebit is going to be very famous indeed. *Panzer Dragoon Orta* is on a whole 'nother level.

Moebius Trip

The look and feel of the *Panzer* universe owes its unique style to French comic book artist Jean Giraud, somewhat better known (these days anyway) as Moebius. The artist was born in 1938 and worked on a lot of mainstream stuff, but his surreal, crystal-obsessed work as Moebius propelled him into the limelight in the west. He and another Frenchie came up with a weird, sexy, surreal comic called *Metal Hurlant*. Which you may know better as *Heavy Metal*. Yes, he's that guy. The overall look of his art is gorgeously detailed and wholly imaginative... and even the dragons look more sculptured than organic.



■ These dragons are weird, rather than pretty.



■ Weather effects add tremendously to the atmosphere and style, and rain actually obscures targets.

■ Some levels flash by at tremendous speed, and the "rails" won't necessarily keep you on track.

■ There's a real knack to switching viewpoint to target bad guys.

■ The epic scale of the game is best demonstrated in boss battles.

These levels will probably destroy your fragile mind with their unholy magnificence.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
- Epic worlds.
- Frantic blasting.
- Amazing storyline.

NEEDS WORK
- There are "rails."
- It's mega-Japanese.

SCREAM LIKE A GIRL
Smilebit has done so much cool stuff for the Xbox that we're starting to feel a little spoiled. And honestly, this is the best-looking game they've ever done. Our own Dave Rees literally screamed when he saw it. Like a woman. Not only *like* a woman, but like an especially nervous helium-sniffing Victorian woman who'd just been surprised by Jack the Ripper carrying a bag of angry mice. So it must be good.

WE LOVE IT.
You're going to be hearing an awful lot about *Panzer*, if only from us. The staff is good and obsessed, and the game looks so incredible (especially in motion) that it will practically sell itself.

FINAL THOUGHTS
All work and no *Panzer* makes Jack a dull boy. It's just an incredible bonus that the "jacks" on this magazine can actually call *Panzer*, work. Sometimes we really love our jobs... then there are days filled with *Kabuki Warriors* and *Azurik* – still, we aren't complaining, much.

■ **WHAT'S AZEL:** Fans of *Panzer Dragoon* were especially impressed by *Panzer Dragoon Azel*, an underrated but astonishing RPG set in the *Panzer* universe.

■ **WHAT'S A PANZER?:** Although lots of people think it comes from the German word for "panther," it's actually German for "armor." So *Panzer Dragoon* means "armored soldier."

BC

■ Oops. T-Rex. And those are YOUR feet dangling from his giant jaws of death.

When dinosaurs and hotties walked the earth...

Forget for a moment the deliberately faulty and anachronistic setting – cavemen coexisting with dinosaurs – and instead immerse yourself in an ideal loftier even than *Project Ego*. *BC* intends to fully simulate a world, complete with a viable food chain, a thriving ecosystem, and a wonderfully diverse environment, from thriving forests to arid desert to mountain snows. But we'll start, if we may, in a golden, flower-filled valley.

Here you find out that this is primarily a third-person action-adventure game, but with really creative overtones. You play the part of a primitive human as he battles to find food, shelter, and safety from the occasionally lethal fauna. Actually, let's make that megafauna. But even the flora is impressive here. In *BC*, you're surrounded by natural-looking landscapes, complete with volumetric grass, realistic flowers, and weather – basically anything you can think of.

Wandering around and finding fish is all well and good, but the game features over one hundred "technologies," as the game's creators put it, including an array of weapons for hunting and defending your tribe. You can play much of the game solo, running around, exploring your surroundings, and enjoying the view, but to progress through the game, you'll need to educate your tribe and enlist their help.

Most of the time, they will learn simply by watching you, but occasionally some puzzling problems require more creative solutions – like how to make bread from the abundant corn. And if you think grinding corn is a tricky problem, how about felling one of the local marauding velociraptors? Or finding out which of those juicy berries causes immediate and agonizing death?

The demonstration we saw contained so much rich, detailed interaction and vivid beauty, we could happily just watch someone else play for hours. But since this is a videogame at heart, and not simply a world simulation, there has to be conflict, and there's no better source of conflict than a true bad guy. *BC* delivers this with the introduction (later in the game) of a rival, and more bestial tribe of proto-humans. So defending against, and finally defeating, these guys has more than just comfort at stake – it's the future of mankind, and it's resting in your big, weird, hairy hands.

– Frank O'Connor

Only on Xbox

Did you even look at these screenshots? These are real blades of grass – with flowers, we might add. And insects pollinating the flowers. And the water features actual currents, and eddies. And it's THE BEST WATER EVER. And the trees are better than the *Halo* trees, and the dinosaurs look just like dinosaurs, and even the people look fantastic. And that's before we discuss the bump-mapped terrain textures, or the amazing draw distances... all of this can only be done on Xbox.

TRACK RECORD

DEVELOPER: **Intrepid Games** | PUBLISHER: **Microsoft** | RELEASE DATE: **2003**

WHO ARE THEY?: Matt Chilton and Joe Rider founded Intrepid in 1999, with the lofty goal of innovative excellence in videogame design. As well they should, both having cut their teeth at Bullfrog under the tutelage of Peter Molyneux. Kind of. Anyhoo, they are the second company to be accepted as a satellite developer of Lionhead Studios, Molyneux's latest gig. As such, they get the benefit of constant visits and advice from the *Populous* creator himself. Although to be honest, it doesn't look like they need much help.



■ An herbivore takes a drink from a tranquil river. Another example of the living world of *BC*.

■ Some dinosaurs are simply unconcerned with humans – thankfully.



■ These two can't make a loaf of bread between them, and yet they've mysteriously mastered underwire support technology.

■ The flowers look real, the dinosaurs are part of a realistic food chain, and those Pteranodons will swoop low to check you out.

The creators plan to fill every corner of this amazing world with discovery and well-planned gameplay.

WIRED

We say www.intrepidgames.com is one of this planet's only acceptable Shockwave Flash websites.

Dino danger

The ecosystem in *BC* includes dinosaurs, which might upset some paleontologists, but they can just shut up because dinosaurs versus people rocks, as dictated by Raquel Welch in *One Million Years BC*, which certainly inspired the bras in this videogame. The dinosaurs don't just run around attacking stuff either, they're part of a real food chain. So the Brontosaurus munching leaves near your camp is harmless, but her babies may attract some unwanted attention from raptors and, of course, the dreaded Tyrannosaurus Rex. There are lots more dinosaurs in the game, including Pteranodons (who'll occasionally dart down to see if you're lunch).

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
- Gack! Look at it!
- Innovative gameplay.
- Vast world.

NEEDS WORK
- Not out until 2003.
- 2003 is so far away!

EGO MANIACS
Bizarrely, *BC* might end up being even bigger than *Project Ego*. The game has such an enthralling premise, such intricate, convincing graphics, and so much broad appeal, that it will definitely reach a bigger audience than the RPG nuts who'll swarm around *Ego*. This is a game that anyone would be hypnotized by. When Molyneux demonstrated it for us, we just wanted to rip the controller out of his hands and run around in the flowers like morons.

WORLD ACCORDING TO PETER
The word is only just leaking out about *BC* now, so not much has been said about this so far. But believe us, you're going to be hearing a lot more. It's not a hard concept to sell, and Microsoft will start hammering the point home in the lead up to the game's launch in 2003. Expect to read lots of wordy Peter Molyneux interviews between now and then.

FINAL THOUGHTS
Can't wait. We can't wait to BE a caveman, and SKIN a goat, or whatever it is they ate back then. Probably maize and bugs for the first half of the game, but we're looking forward to evolving the tribe. And grinding corn. And fishing. And hiding from dinosaurs. And moving the encampment to somewhere nice and safe.

■ **HOW MANY YEARS BC?:** Had this game realistically been set One Million years before Christ, in the Pleistocene period, folks looked pretty much like now, only smellier.

■ **SABER TOOTH TRAUMA:** And we probably killed the Saber Tooth tiger right about this time, since they had a nasty habit of eating us if we didn't kill 'em first.

Big Earl uses his funkifying powers to convert this cheerleader into a happy camper.

ToeJam & Earl III: All Funked Up

Funkifying the universe, one gamer at a time

When Sega was reborn as a third-party publisher at the tail end of Dreamcast's decline into non-existence as a console, the company vowed to revamp itself on the strength of its most beloved franchises. And among those products, *ToeJam & Earl III* surfaced as an Xbox's exclusive.

With a history that includes two previous titles on Genesis, the *ToeJam & Earl* series has always been known for its quirky humor and two-player gaming. And after an extended hands-on with the game at the recent E3 convention in Los Angeles, we can safely say that those are two aspects that have remained thoroughly intact for the third installment in the series.

Players can play through the game as any one of three different characters: the returning ToeJam or Earl, or the new female sidekick Latisha. Each alien has its own set of skills, strengths, and weaknesses, which you'll have to learn in order to navigate the game's collection of worlds, which span all environments from snow fields to desert plains.

At the start of the game, the alien trio is sent to Earth by their planet's leader in order to track down a dozen of its stolen Albums of Funk. With the threat of non-funkiness looming, TJ, Big Earl, and Latisha are ordered to retrieve the records at all costs – which also means battling with Earth's hordes of wickedly unfunky citizens. In other words, you can expect to use your powers to either defeat or convert all manners of enemies running the gamut from decidedly sinister blonde cheerleaders to stealthy bogeymen to dangerous construction workers.

As part of your arsenal of moves, skills, and defenses, you'll be able to lure enemies away from the dark side to the enlightened, happy funk of Planet Funkotron by "funkifying" them. You can do this a number of ways, but most importantly, you'll need the help of "Presents" (power-up items that you find scattered throughout each level) in order to get almost anything done. Many of the Presents are similar in name and function to those found in previous titles in the series, but there are a ton of new ones to be found and exploited as well, including the Super Spring Shoes (jump higher) and Icarus Wings (fly for a limited time). In addition, each character will have their own special "Funk-fu" moves to counter the attacks from enemies. And with each level completed and prerequisite met, your Funk-fu skills will increase, gradually bumping you up through the different martial arts belt levels with the end goal of receiving a black belt in Funk-fu.

But this isn't all. You'll also be able to participate in all sorts of mini-games that are either incorporated into the central gameplay or hidden throughout each stage. The button-tapping, rhythm-beat sequences that unfold during gameplay can often earn you points, as well as protect you by slowly luring hostile Earthlings to the funky side. Hidden mini-games are also accessible with a little good ol' fashioned sleuthing (they're indicated by floating "sparkles") and can lead you into cool sub-missions to earn extra goodies.

And you don't have to play through the game alone. In the tradition of the *TJ&E* series, you'll be able to invite a friend to join in on the fun. You can cooperate to achieve the same goals as those found in the single-player game, but there are some stages that are only available to certain characters. Therefore, if you're playing through as Big Earl and have Latisha in tow, you'll be able to access some levels only playable by Latisha.

With its unique and accessible gameplay, Sega's ode to multiplayer old-school gaming hopes to hit the right note with Xbox gamers.

– Francesca Reyes

TRACK RECORD

DEVELOPER: **Visual Concepts/TJ&E Prod.** | PUBLISHER: **Sega** | RELEASE DATE: **October 2002**

WHO ARE THEY?: Both Visual Concepts and ToeJam & Earl Productions have long histories stretching all the way back to the 16-bit era. But Visual Concepts is best known for its spectacular take on sports videogaming with its *2K* series that encompasses football, baseball, and hockey, while TJ&E Productions has a spot in old-school gamers' hearts with its *ToeJam & Earl* series.

Only on Xbox



What could be more "only on Xbox" than the entire game? Well, that's what's exclusive to Xbox this time around. You won't find *TJ&E III* on any other platform – ever.



Giving a friend a high five in co-op can give them a leg up in health, which can mean the difference between success and failure.

Two-player co-op means you can do all sorts of tag team duties, including ganging up on enemies to give them the heave-ho.

WIRED

For the lowdown on *TJ&E III*, you can check out a number of sites including Sega's at www.sega.com or the developer's site at www.tjande.com.

Back to (old) school



The original *ToeJam & Earl* released for Sega's 16-bit Genesis back in 1991 and attracted a devoted following with its strange humor, wacky aliens, and multiplayer gameplay. The sequel, *ToeJam & Earl II: Panic on Funkotron*, capitalized on the former's success and released in 1993. Many fans claim that the original is still the best and funkiest, but its sequel did a good job of luring in even more fans to the growing group.



***TJ&E* had two-player, even then.**

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
- Highly accessible controls and gameplay.
- Loads and loads of different things to do.
- A boatload of character appeal and nice graphics.

NEEDS WORK
- Will the pseudo-hip-hop thing go down well?
- ToeJam has some self-esteem issues.

HIP OR HIT?
Like the two games before it, *TJ&E III* shows every sign of being a solid, fun, multiplayer game with quirky character appeal. But will it cross over from being a niche fan favorite from the Genesis days to a next-generation hit? It's hard to say, but with Microsoft fully behind the title with a major marketing push, it just may catch the mainstream gamer's eye – we'll do our part to help.

SPLIT SCREEN
One of the features that Sega and Visual Concepts are pushing heavily is the fact that when you're playing *TJ&E III* with a friend, the screen will remain single screen, until there is too much distance between your characters. If that happens, the screen will seamlessly split in two. Will it be confusing and disorienting? After a hands-on, we can say that it works quite well and solves a lot of problems found in multiplayer gaming.

FINAL THOUGHTS
Original and light-hearted games are anything but the norm these days, and honestly, *TJ&E* is a refreshing change. The play is solid, the story is wacky, and the game will be an absolute blast to play. Don't let the cutesy graphics fool ya, this game is definitely best enjoyed by adults… much like any good cartoon.

WHAT DA FUNK?: With a name like "All Funked Up," we're bound to use the word "funk" more than a few times. How many times did we use it in this preview? Answer: 18.

A GOOD OR BAD RAP?: Ever wondered what those rhymes were that Big Earl and his partner, TJ, were spouting out during the *TJ & E* Rap? Well, now you can read up on it at www.tjande.com.

Lamborghini

Get your motor running, and get used to banana-yellow exotica

To celebrate the launch of the new Lamborghini Murcielago, Rage is creating a racer based entirely around the driving passion that is Lamborghini. Every model you dreamt of owning during childhood (or during your mid-life crisis) is included in the game, ready to be thrashed beyond all limits.

According to project manager Richard Badger, the idea to develop a game based solely around a single manufacturer was inspired by Lamborghini's rich and proud history of producing a stable of super high-performance sports cars.

Owners can get together whenever they like and compare their impossibly cherry Lamborghinis.

"Everyone knows names like Countach, Miura, and Diablo," Badger explains. "The combination of flamboyant styling and extreme performance was an attractive prospect. Now under the ownership of Audi, Lamborghini has just launched a new car called the Murcielago, which has won awards around the world and broken three world records for car performance. This included covering 100 miles in just 30 minutes – averaging just over 200mph."

Rage is also taking the age-old racing formula to new heights with options to race for new cars online. "*Lamborghini* will be one of the first console games in the world to feature online racing via broadband," says Badger. "It will look and feel like you're racing via System Link, but you could be racing anyone." Although the single-player game will be packed with options, the thought of racing against global competition is the Xbox experience we've been waiting for.

"Having built up a collection of cars in single player, we plan to allow players to transfer their garage into an online garage," says Badger. "We're aiming to allow racers to bet virtual cash and cars on the outcome with an online database storing lap records, richest player, and each player's garage. There's also a team aspect we're currently looking at."

Rage has also chosen nine locations from around the world for track settings, with a well-balanced mix of urban and rural racing. As players unlock the tracks in the game, they'll be exposed to Las Vegas, Hong Kong, the Italian Alps, Germany's Black Forest, Rome, Sydney, Paris, the Pacific Coast Highway, and Lamborghini's Italian test track.

– Frank O'Connor

TRACK RECORD

DEVELOPER: **Rage Software** | PUBLISHER: **TBD** | RELEASE DATE: **Fall 2002**

WHO ARE THEY?: Rage is a very busy UK developer that makes a wide variety of games ranging from soccer to mech combat. Currently Rage is working on *Rocky* and *GunMetal* for Xbox, as well as a couple of other projects.



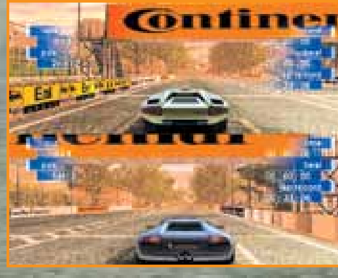
■ The Murcielago basks in the ding-free safety of the garage.

■ Countach in its somewhat overdone 25th Anniversary shape.





■ Aah, Roma! Bella Roma! But where's all the traffic?



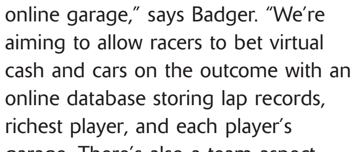
■ And there's split-screen for regular Joes with no broadband...

■ Check out the ultra-realistic reflections on the wet pavement. Suh-weet.

Lambodreamy

There'll be around 20 models in the game, with unusual cars as well as the classics. Together, they trace the history of the brand, with the 350 GT, Miura (frequently mentioned as the most beautiful sportscar ever made), Countach, Diablo, and the new Murcielago, shown in several models. You can drive the Countach LP400, 5000 QV, 25th anniversary edition, or GT. These get uglier and more ridiculous the later they get, with huge plastic body kits that would even embarrass a Japanese drift racer.

Only on Xbox



Aah. Online play. Bump-mapped graphics. Realistic cars. And did we mention online? I believe we did. This is why you bought an Xbox. If you bought a Lamborghini as well, you can probably afford, like, ten Xbox systems. So you probably want to know about System Link, which we have no information on at this point.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
- Play and collect online.
- Cool locations.
- Photo-real cars.

NEEDS WORK
- Online details vague.
- Just the one brand of vehicle – albeit one of the best brands.

ONLINE DREAMS
With online play, you're looking at a whole new genre of game! A classic cars collector club that exists in a virtual universe, where owners can get together whenever they like and compare their impossibly cherry Lamborghinis and race them all over the world. But since we don't have any info about the intricate details of *Lamborghini*'s online play features, we just have to assume that it's going to be a very pretty and compelling racer.

OL' YELLER
Kids love Lamborghinis, and so, frankly, do farty old men, but the advent of the absurdly powerful new Murcielago means that the car and the brand are all over the automotive press. Expect to see lots of bright yellow Lambos at newsstands all over America, but not necessarily in the parking lot at Safeway.

FINAL THOUGHTS
Slick graphics and a collection of incredibly exotic vehicles makes *Lamborghini* one to watch, but we've said it before and we'll say it again, one line of cars does not make for a lot of variety. Although we'll wait and see how the classic and new models interact. And online, too? Rockin' good news.

■ **MERCY ME, MURCIELAGO:** The new Lamborghini is named after a famous fighting bull, which in turn was named after the Spanish word for *bat*.

■ **MORE MURCIELAGO:** Bizarrely, Murcielago is also the only Spanish word that contains all five vowels. That information will be real useful for the rest of your life… kinda like algebra.



X-Men: Wolverine's Revenge

Unsheathe your claws, get out the hair gel, and prepare to kick mutant booty

Hands up if you think Cyclops is the best X-Man. Or perhaps The Beast? Nope? Everyone out there appears to be waiting patiently for me to say "Wolverine." Ah, there we are. A nice show of hands. The X-Men would have simply shriveled up and died a long time ago had it not been for the short-but-scary mutant with the Adamantium skeleton and the trademark claws. And here he is, in yet another videogame, but one that presents him as the star, and in his favorite environment: close-up melee fighting.

One other thing that separates this from prior X-Men outings into videogame land is an actual plot. In fact, it's a pretty compelling plot. Our hero has been infected with a viral time bomb, and by the time he discovers the infection, he has a mere 48 hours to live. That's just two days to find out who did this to him and how to get rid of it (short of actually dying, that is.)

The plot was created exclusively for the game by comic-book legend Larry Hama. This might explain why it's actually interesting. Gone are the days where a character's motivation was simply to walk right and punch stuff. Which is not to say this game doesn't feature its fair share of walking and punching. As Wolverine makes his way to the Canadian wilderness and the clandestine Department H facility, he'll encounter and fight all manner of villains, both mortal and superhuman. A complex fighting engine allows Wolverine to battle his way out of multi-fighter scraps, with claws sheathed or extended, using special moves and grapples to mix things up a little.

Only on Xbox

It looks suspiciously like a straight port at this point, but there's still plenty of time to bump-map and vertex-shade Wolverine's hairy chest. What? You don't want that? How about online features or System Link play for multiplayer? Unlikely! Looks like *Wolverine* is going to be a one-player epic.

TRACK RECORD

DEVELOPER: **GenePool** | PUBLISHER: **Activision** | RELEASE DATE: **Fall 2002**

WHO ARE THEY?: GenePool kind of split off from Warthog in the UK, but they're still buddies, since Warthog is working with them on the PS2 version. This is GenePool's first game as a separate entity but while they were part of Warthog they worked on games like the mighty impressive *Starlancer*. So there's definitely some dev cred with this crew.

If you tire quickly of punching goons, then try your hand against some of Wolverine's (least?) favorite villains, including Wendigo, Sabertooth, and our favorite, the impossibly powerful Juggernaut. We actually got a chance to see this encounter, and while the voice-overs aren't final, they were pretty damn hilarious. As you are fighting this giant mutant-strocity, he bellows out whines and threats. And (of course) it wouldn't be an X-Men game without an appearance by Magneto, but his role in this game is a closely guarded secret.

Superheroes are big. Simple as that.

The fighting system is made more elaborate by the inclusion of navigable, destructible, and attractively rendered 3D backdrops. Fighting on the edge of a precipice is different from a five-man melee in a tight hallway. Wolverine can also sense impending danger using his heightened senses, recover quickly from damage using healing factor, and naturally smash bad guys to bits with his enormous strength. And should our hero find himself in real trouble, he can call in a little help from other X-Men including Professor X and the Beast.

– Frank O'Connor



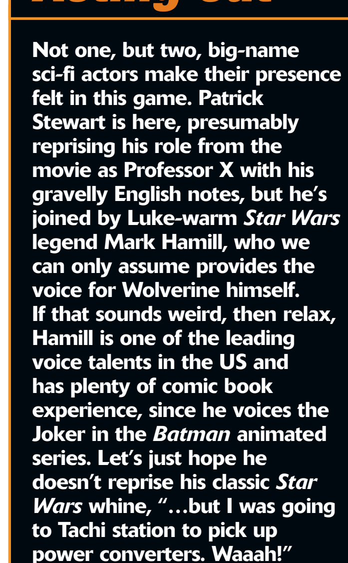
Two guys at once? No problem for our two-fisted hero.



Wolverine gets to wear a variety of costumes. None are sexy.

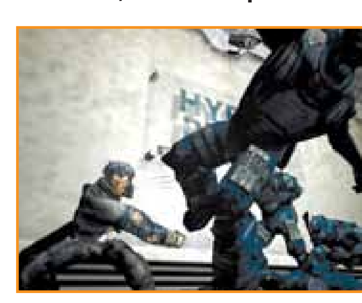


Don't panic, the game will use slightly less-dramatic camera angles than these, which are "posed-for-best-effect" shots.



Acting out

Not one, but two, big-name sci-fi actors make their presence felt in this game. Patrick Stewart is here, presumably reprising his role from the movie as Professor X with his gravelly English notes, but he's joined by Luke-warm *Star Wars* legend Mark Hamill, who we can only assume provides the voice for Wolverine himself. If that sounds weird, then relax, Hamill is one of the leading voice talents in the US and has plenty of comic book experience, since he voices the Joker in the *Batman* animated series. Let's just hope he doesn't reprise his classic *Star Wars* whine, "...but I was going to Tachi station to pick up power converters. Waaah!"



Bad guys have relatively sophisticated AI.



Fights can get crowded and frantic, so keep your head.



It looks as though he's had more than enough of Wolverine...



Juggling multiple attackers, *Final Fight*-style, is half the battle.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
- Great character models.
- Buttery animation.
- Extra X-Men.

NEEDS WORK
- No sign of multiplayer.
- *Final Fight* redux?

MARVEL-OUS
Who doesn't love Wolverine? Nobody, that's who, and if Activision works hard to keep this true to the comic book, then it could have a big hit on its hands. Frankly, only *Marvel vs. Capcom* really did the Adamantium Animal justice. This might help even the score for console fans.

COMICS GO MAINSTREAM
The new *X-Men* movie is well underway, the last *X-Men* movie is out on DVD, and the comic books continue to be a runaway success. The recent popularity of *Spider-Man* won't hurt this either, and nor will the massive buzz around the impending *Hulk* movie. Superheroes are big. Simple as that.

FINAL THOUGHTS
Quite honestly, we just don't know enough about the gameplay structure or the (brand-new) developer GenePool to make any rash assumptions about how this will turn out. But we can say that so far the graphics engine looks fantastic, and if the gameplay kicks as much ass as Wolverine does, then we're in for a mutant-sized treat.

ADAM AND THE ANTIUMS: Wolverine's skeleton is made from a near-indestructible metal named Adamantium. Adam Ant, on the other hand, is a washed-up '80s pop-star serving time for being too creepy.

WHAT'S A WOLVERINE?: Related to the weasel, a real wolverine is also known as a "glutton" and a "skunk-bear." Coincidentally, those are some of the nicer pet-names used by our spouses.

Team SAS

Who dares, wins.

■ Anyone who's seen the movie *Predator* will remember seeing a certain state governor destroy a jungle doing this exact thing.

Made in close collaboration with Andy McNab, the 22 SAS Regiment's most famous ex-member and a notable British author, *Team SAS* throws you into the dense jungle to defeat one General Piotr Kiminsky, a megalomaniacal Communist hardliner. You and your team must unravel a conspiracy dating back to the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1968 as Kiminsky holds the world to ransom…

As with SCi's *Conflict: Desert Storm*, you can choose to play as a member of either Britain's elite SAS or America's equally scary Rangers as a team commander, a scout, a heavy weapons expert, or a sniper. Teamwork is essential, as you have to master different roles and develop your abilities to keep one step ahead of Kiminsky's army.

> ***Team SAS* features 12 missions, which play differently every time.**

Team SAS features 12 missions, which play differently every time to maximize replay value. Along the way you'll have to battle through tribal villages, derelict working facilities, canyons, and even Aztec ruins. (It almost sounds as though we're watching the Discovery Channel…)

Yank or Limey, sniper or scout... whichever you choose, one thing remains constant – frighteningly tough enemies. Rather than blocking your path with dumb goons who couldn't hit water buffaloes glued to their AK-47s, *Team SAS* pits you against well-hidden snipers, grenadiers, and even Black Ops terrorists. So it's you versus your evil Commie equivalents in campaigns designed to be played either alone or with up to four co-op players.

The jungle will be brought to life using a variety of effects that are only possible on Xbox. You'll see fully 3D moving foliage that will reveal you if you crash through bushes too quickly, but will also alert you to nearby patrols when they do the same. Volumetric fog provides cover, while rays of sunlight peeping through the trees will cast shadows on the sweaty jungle floor. As you can see from the screenshots, *Team SAS* is starting to look like the real deal – tense, gritty, yet fun. Wish we knew more about online, though…

– Nomar DeGuerre

TRACK RECORD

DEVELOPER: **Rage Software** | PUBLISHER: **TBD** | RELEASE DATE: **Fall 2002**

WHO ARE THEY?: Rage is the developer, and while the company is a lovely mid-sized publisher in the UK and Europe, and is in fact very famous over there (thanks in large part to a series of wicked soccer games), here they're simply known as a skilled developer. It's likely that this and other titles will be published by a third party.

Only on Xbox

The volumetric effects for fog, mist, and smoke marry well with the convincingly verdant junglescapes, and the co-op play is something that just isn't technologically practical on other, lesser systems. Unfortunately, there's been no word yet on System Link or online features. Keep your fingers crossed.

Zero to hero

Andy McNab signed up with the infantry in 1976 as a boy soldier. In 1984, he was badged as a member of 22 SAS Regiment where he served in B Squadron for nine glorious years. McNab has worked on both covert and overt special operations around the world, including anti-terrorist and anti-drug operations in the Middle East, Far East, South America, Central America, and Northern Ireland. He has worked closely with Rage's programmers to provide the type of technical input that only someone of his obscenely decorated background could. He is also being used as a model for motion capture.

During the Gulf War, McNab commanded the ill-fated Bravo Two Zero patrol. McNab has written about his experiences in the SAS in two best-selling books, *Bravo Two Zero* (1993) and *Immediate Action* (1995). To date his books have sold over five million copies worldwide and been published in 17 different countries in 22 languages. This man really knows his covert operations.



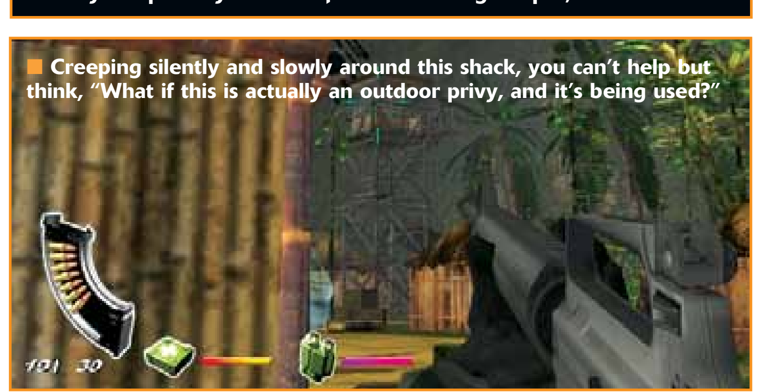
■ It's amazing what you can hide in the jungle with a little camouflage netting and a lick or two of green paint. In this case, an entire air base.



■ Although stealth plays a huge part in the game, firefights in the wildly varying terrain can get pretty intense, and fog of war is a problem.



■ The sniper rifle doesn't just belong to a class of weapons, it's actually the primary tool of a job – that being "sniper," of course.



■ Creeping silently and slowly around this shack, you can't help but think, "What if this is actually an outdoor privy, and it's being used?"

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
- Tensely paced action.
- Lush-a-riffic environs.
- Co-op combat.

NEEDS WORK
- Online? Pretty please?
- Why are there no vehicles?

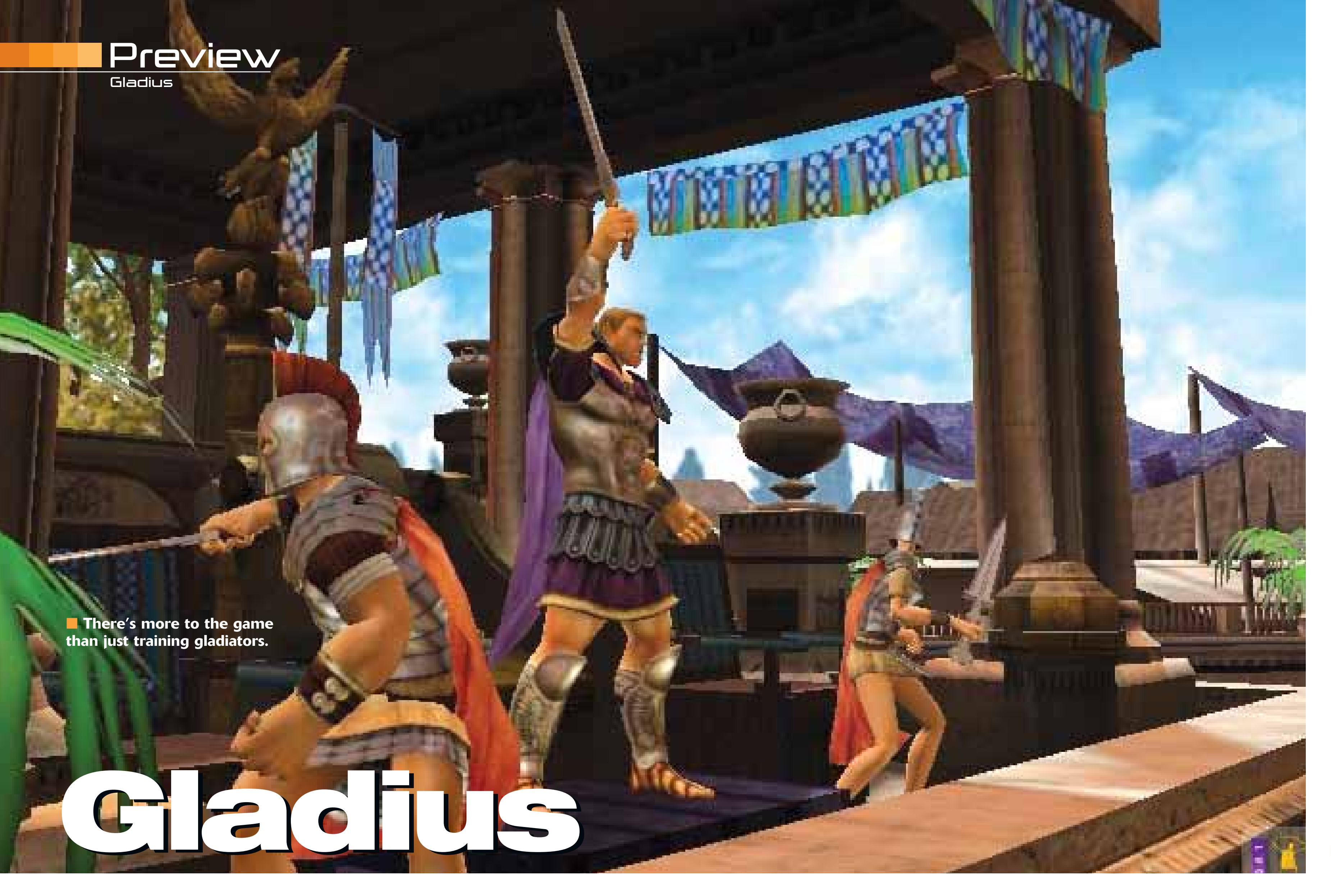
WHAT'S IN A NAME
This game will almost certainly get a name change should a US publisher pick it up. And we reckon the name would be changed to include the US Rangers, since they're total bad-asses as well. And they "lead the way." Our guess is a combination of the two forces called *SASsy Rangers: Who Wins, Leads.*

YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE
With all the squad-based combat and military shooters headed to the Xbox (think *Ghost Recon, Brute Force*, etc.) it would be pretty easy for this game to get lost in the mix. Until we know who's publishing it in the US, we're going to be your best bet for new info on this exciting-sounding game.

FINAL THOUGHTS
It's one thing to have luxuriant jungles in your game for the sake of prettiness, but the way the organic environments react to reveal or hide your location is pretty darned cool. The squad stuff is interesting, and the range of weapons and tactics afforded by the inclusion of SAS and Ranger units is impressive. This ought to kick butt.

■ **PART TIMER:** McNab also heads up a security company that runs a specialist training course for news crews, journalists, and organizations working in war zones. The course is the only one of its kind in the world.

■ **SASSY LADS:** SAS actually stands for Special Air Service, which goes well with their ability to deliver hand grenades from aerial ziplines.



■ There's more to the game than just training gladiators.

Gladius

Swords, sandals... and spells?

When we first heard whispers about this game, we really weren't sure if it was a combat game or an RPG. The reason for our confusion has become abundantly clear – it's actually both. That's right, you can now officially combine any genre at your whim. So if you've got a jonesin' for a beat-rhythm-survival-strategy game, just hold on; it's likely coming.

Joking aside, LucasArts should be commended for doing something really different. This isn't just a mish-mash of genres, it's something approaching a rare videogaming phenomenon – true originality.

Featuring the exploits and antics of two young gladiators, Ursula (there were in fact plenty of female gladiators in the Roman Empire, and very popular they were, too) and Valens, who not only fight in the gladiatorial arena themselves, but also recruit, manage, and train their own stable of fighters (which also really happened in the Roman Empire). You can train 16 different classes of fighter, in everything from javelin throwing to simple swordplay.

But since this is, after all, an RPG, there's also a little magic tossed into the mix for good measure. Not only can certain classes use magic, but some, like the Galdr witches, practically rely on it. Others, like the Imperial Legionary, depend on weapons like the Trident, shield, and eponymous gladius.

Since this is, after all, an RPG, there's also a little magic tossed into the mix.

Gladius, like the Roman Empire itself, covers a wide range of territory... from the frozen tundra of the northern wastes to the arid deserts of North Africa, from the barbaric woodlands of Gaul and Germania all the way back to the fragrant, verdant hills of Rome itself. Naturally your fighters are culled (and occasionally killed) from these regions. There are at least 32 places to fight, only 20 of which are imperially sanctioned arenas. The other fighting locations will be somewhat less organized and perhaps more exciting. To reach all of these arenas, you will, of course, have to win these fights.

Choosing between Ursula and Valens (each from aristocratic but differing backgrounds) will affect how your team of gladiators evolves, but more importantly it changes the plot and outcome of the RPG aspect dramatically. And no matter who you choose in the beginning, Ursula and Valens are, it seems, destined to meet. A plot is afoot to resurrect an ancient and dark power that could threaten the games themselves. This turn of events marks a pretty massive change in the direction of the game.

After this, you're required to lead a smaller band of fighters in a quest to defeat a dark and evil god and the followers who guard him. To battle these minions, you'll have to master a somewhat unusual combat system. Although this is very much an RPG, a timing-based action element has been added to the turn-based combat, so it requires skill as well as sound judgment. All things to everyone? Here's hoping.

– Frank O'Connor

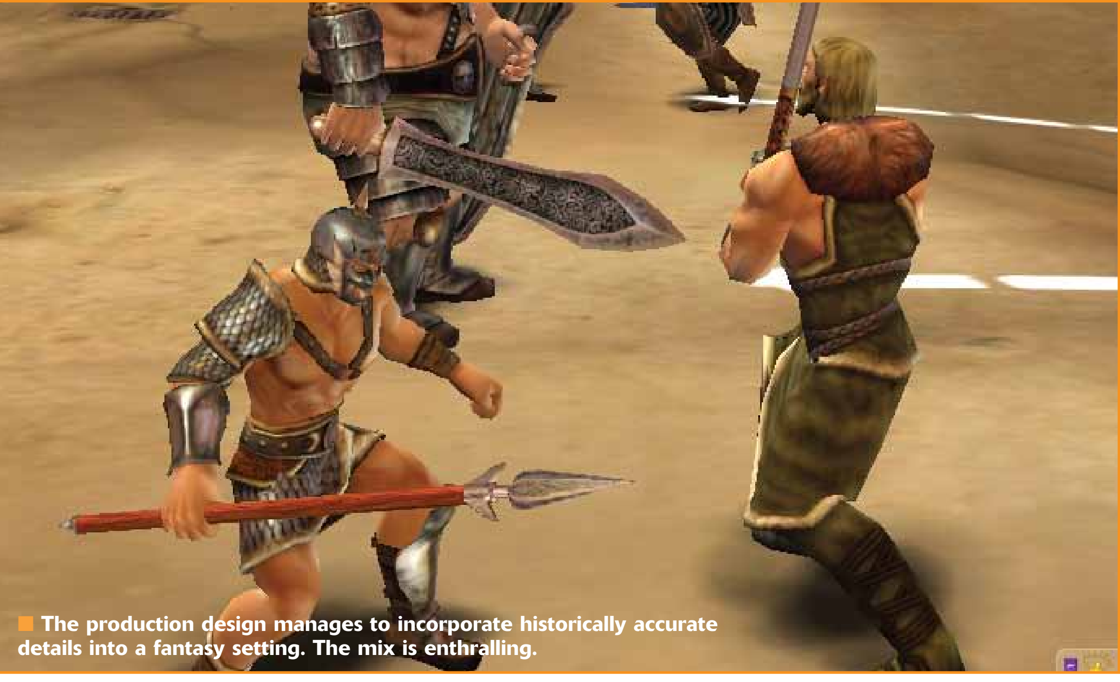
WIRED

For more information on this epic RPG, visit www.lucasarts.com.

TRACK RECORD

DEVELOPER: **LucasArts** | PUBLISHER: **LucasArts** | RELEASE DATE: **Fall 2002**

WHO ARE THEY?: LucasArts is the videogame division of LucasFilm. Industrial Light and Magic is the special effects division, and Lucas Learning is the educational arm of the company. They also have under their wings the THX organization, which does research and development in the digital and analog audio fields.

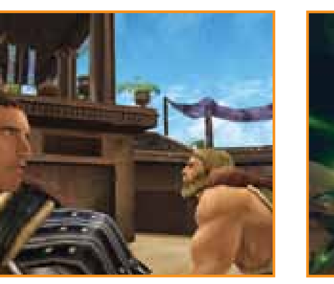


■ The production design manages to incorporate historically accurate details into a fantasy setting. The mix is enthralling.

Class Action

The fact that you can train up to 16 classes of warriors is pretty impressive, and without much further explanation, seems like a lot of variety. But it gets deeper. Much deeper. Spread among the 16 classes of fighter are more than 100 different and largely customizable character types. But that's not all. You can equip your force of gladiator/soldiers with up to 400 different items, including weapons, shields, armor, and more. That means that basically no two players' teams of gladiators are ever likely to be identical. Unless everyone thrashes the A button to speed through the selection process, that is.

■ RPG meets combat with a unique skill-based fighting system.



■ The level of detail on character faces is remarkable.



■ A little magic is thrown into the mix for RPG purists.



■ Atmospheric graphics take you from place to place.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
- Brilliant concept.
- Rich combat system.
- Epic scale.

NEEDS WORK
- Weird hybrid of styles.
- May lack focus.

DO YOU LIKE GLADIATOR MOVIES?
Gladius is going to be famous, one way or another. Even the comparatively simple *Circus Maximus* tapped into gamers' desire for a good swords-and-sandals epic. Given that the game quite deliberately tries to appeal to RPG, action, adventure, and strategy fans all at once, it's bound to appeal to a wide cross-section of the gaming public.

HYPE
LucasArts seemed rightfully proud of this game at E3, and although there's still plenty of work to be done, we're going to be hearing a lot about *Gladius*, both before and after it launches.

FINAL THOUGHTS
Last time LucasArts did something this original, it was a little game we like to call *The Secret of Monkey Island*. So you've probably guessed we're expecting great things from this game. If we guess right, *Gladius* will be one of the biggest RPGs to come from a US developer in a very long time... and perhaps one of the strangest.

■ **GRAD YOU'RE WITH US:** If the word *Gladius* sounds a lot like the word *Gradius* (Konami coin-op), that's because *Gradius* is the Japanese pronunciation of *Gladius*.

■ **SWORD OF THE NOT-SO-BERSERK:** And a gladius, in case you're wondering, is the short Roman sword often used by gladiators. Hence the name gladiator.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4

Only on Xbox

Wait 'til you see the new skate-park editor. You'll be very glad you have a hard drive. But there are also the improved graphics (up to 480p), the smooth frame rates, and the better textures to consider. And then add on the Dolby 5:1 surround sound, the user selectable soundtrack, and if they include the online play… boy, oh boy.

This *Tony* has better character models, more detailed graphics, much bigger environments, more interactive objects, and tons more game modes.

So who's this Tony Hawk guy? And what does he do professionally again…?

The *Tony* phenomenon is quite unlike anything else out there. It took a comparatively obscure sport and a relatively unknown exponent of said sport and turned both into huge stars, both in videogames and outside of them. If you think that Tony Hawk would be skating outside Dave Letterman's studio without the benefit of the game, then you may have bailed on your head one time too many.

The game's success, iteration after iteration, can be attributed to a steady (and admirable) level of improvement. Each new version has been better than the last. Graphics have been tweaked, physics improved, features added, and irritating little problems addressed. Start with a great game and grow it year after year.

This year, though, the Neversoft crew was obviously fretting that the game might be getting stale (it wasn't, but, you know, they're perfectionists) so they've kind of overhauled things. Don't worry, the floaty, dreamy physics are still there, but the Career Mode has been flipped on its head. Now instead of a simple and occasionally frustrating linear progression, you can attack any challenge at any time. If you can't do it, you can go try another. A nice touch, and it really adds to the freeform-yet-organized feel of the game structure.

The biggest change, however, is the addition of an all-new "Go Pro" mode. Tony Hawk did not pop into this world a fully formed lanky pro skater (much to his mother's relief, no doubt), but rather worked his way up through the amateur ranks. You can also do that simply by playing the Go Pro mode, eventually unlocking the more difficult Pro game.

The levels themselves have changed pretty dramatically, too. As in *Tony 3*, they evolve and change as you complete objectives, but much more radically. It's even possible to customize a level to suit your play style, turning objects like benches, kickers, and quarter pipes on or off to change up lines, thus changing the style of play and points available.

The physics engine has been tweaked yet again to provide more realistic balancing, much more disastrous-looking bails, and better interaction between board and rider. For danger-fans, moving objects are now rideable, so you can grind rather than simply kickflip over vehicles. And if a crane is rotating while you're riding it, well, that's just another way to shoot for a sick combo, isn't it?

As ever, there are tons of play modes for single and multiplayer fun. You can go head-to-head against your favorite (or least-favorite) pro to beat their most fabulous tricks, and old favorites like HORSE and Tag will be returning. The graphics are better, no doubt, but that aspect of the game seems the least-changed to us. The worlds are richer, the backgrounds more dynamic, but gameplay seems to have been tweaked most of all. The only really big question that had not been answered at time of going to press was: Will this make it to Xbox Live for online play? Activision is being cagey, but we suspect it will.

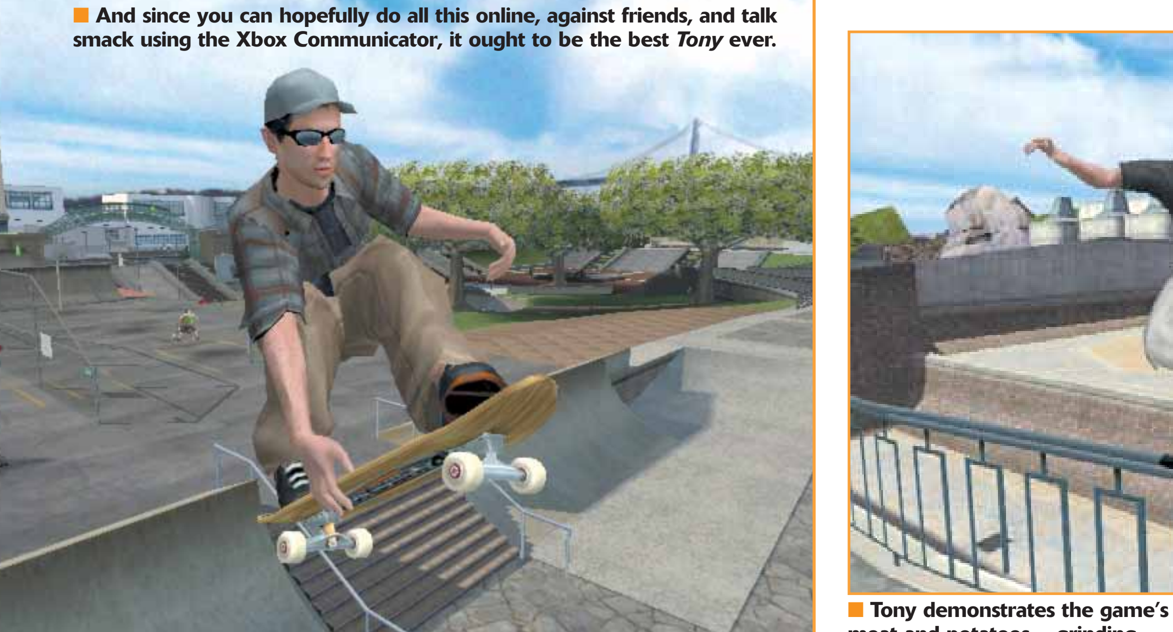
– Frank O'Connor

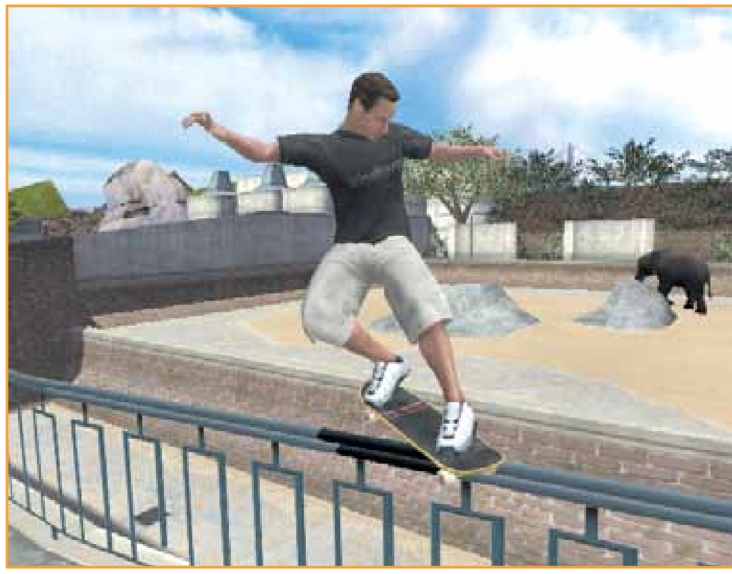
TRACK RECORD

DEVELOPER: **Neversoft Entertainment** | PUBLISHER: **Activision** | RELEASE DATE: **Fall 2002**

WHO ARE THEY?: Neversoft Entertainment is the software company that made Activision one of the best-performing stocks in last year's otherwise disastrous stock market, thanks to games like *Spider-Man* and, of course, a million high-quality versions of *Tony Hawk* on everything from the Xbox to the control panel on your microwave.





And since you can hopefully do all this online, against friends, and talk smack using the Xbox Communicator, it ought to be the best *Tony* ever.


Tony demonstrates the game's meat and potatoes – grinding.

Talkin' trash

Remember the hangers-on in *Tony Hawk 3*? You know, the "Dude, show us what you got" crowd? Well, they're back, but this year someone realized they were a bunch of no-good slackers and decided to give them something useful to do. Now, in *Tony Hawk 4*, they actually serve a useful function – they give out challenges and even open up new areas of the level. For example, you may skate up to some dude and he'll be like, "Hey Tony, go skate over there and collect all those letters to spell out the word S-K-A-T-E." And you'll be like, "What kind of thing is that to say to a complete stranger?" They may also, for example, when approached, open a door or otherwise expose new skating terrain.

Yes, that is a rhino in the background, ignoring you.

Skate Park Tycoon

The Skate Park Editor has been massively upgraded this time around, enabling you to create and build much bigger, more ambitious parks. More importantly, you can actually insert meaningful goals, like high score targets, combos to achieve, and even hidden tapes. If the game does go online, those would make for some VERY interesting online matches, don't you think?

The biggest change is the addition of an all-new "Go Pro" mode.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD
- Better physics.
- New game modes.
- Online play.

NEEDS WORK
- Four sequels is a lot…
- Is *Tony* getting old?

YOU'RE NOT WORTHY
Nobody ever went broke betting on the skills of Neversoft or the strength of the *Tony Hawk* franchise. Each time the boys have revisited the *Tony* tale, things have gotten better. The game design has been subtly, but compellingly, altered and never at the expense of the intangible "magic" that makes the gameplay radiate brilliance. *Tony* will crush all before it.

EXTREME = NEW
As the lazy days of summer approach, outdoor extreme sports will grip the nation yet again. Our bet is that wakeboarding is going to be the next big (media) thing and you'll hear almost as much about Shaun Murray as Tony Hawk this year, although he still pulls the crowds.

FINAL THOUGHTS
There is, as usual, a HUGE amount of stuff added to this sequel, but without an online component, it could be seen as just more of the same. That said, we personally don't have much doubt that online functionality will make it in there. And when it does, we'll be first in line to talk trash, swap maps, and challenge opponents.

■ *TONY HAWK* BOTTOM FILLERS: Science has now proven that the only thing harder than a unified theory of physics is coming up with new facts for *Tony Hawk* bottom fillers.

■ *720* PETITION II: Please, for the love of Pete, somebody make a *Tony Hawk* level that apes the skate parks and burbs of Atari's *720*. This time we mean it.

Reviews

The definitive source for Xbox reviews

Gaming Outlaws

In real life you can't just wander around dungeons hacking trolls. You're not really supposed to get in a car and maliciously ram other cars – on purpose. You can't fly through the hills of San Francisco at 267MPH and smash up cop cars. And you certainly can't book a tee time at a respectable country club and show up with a stripper... okay, maybe that last one is possible. The point here is that games are an escape. A view into a world you'd otherwise never see. This month we take you on virtual review journey through the fender, over the hills, to some old witch's house.

How we score

10 – 8.5 Only the best and the brightest score in this range. If it scores 9.0 or above, then there's no guessing involved. Buy it, love it, and watch as other games follow in its footsteps.

8.4 – 7.0 Just shy of greatness, but still an exceptional experience.

6.9 – 5.0 There's a bit of entertainment to be found, but something's amiss.

4.9 – 2.0 Rushed, poorly executed, or maybe just tired. Only fools dare tread further.

1.9 – 0.0 Craptacular goodness that is proud to call *Fantastic Four* (PSOne) or *Superman* (N64) its superiors.

Editor's Choice Award



Any game that scores 9.0 or higher will be stamped with our Editor's Choice Award. This designation guarantees a solid game to be had by all (all that have $50, of course). So buy it already.

contents



■ What great RPG would be complete without a tree pad with a fancy staircase?

Easily the best, deepest, and... only RPG on Xbox

The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind

DEVELOPER: **BETHESDA SOFTWORKS** | PUBLISHER: **BETHESDA SOFTWORKS**
MULTIPLAYER: **NONE** | WEBSITE: **WWW.ELDERSCROLLS.COM**

While *Morrowind* certainly isn't the prettiest Xbox game we've played to date, it delivers an acceptable level of performance – with more than a few stellar effects just not possible on other consoles (the beauteous pixel-shaded water, awe-inspiring weather effects, and 3D audio, to name a few). Add some truly engrossing gameplay and story-telling on top of intuitive controls, and *Morrowind* is a game role-playing fans should enjoy – and for quite a long, long time at that.

There are *so* many things to do, places to see, people to meet (and kill), and items to find in this game that you couldn't hope to see it all in one play through. If you rush, and you're good, it's possible to beat the main quest in 30-40 hours. However, factor in the almost limitless number of sub-quests you can seek out – and the purely insane amount of locations to explore – and 60 to 100 hours is more likely. The *best* thing is the game doesn't try to force your hand at all. You can proceed with the main quest at your leisure, and via nearly any play style you wish – as a noble crusader, whimsical magician, or the vilest of thieves.

When the game starts, you don't know who you are, where you are, or why you are there. By answering a few simple questions (or by creating a custom character from scratch), you determine your character class and attributes. You learn just the bare minimum to get you started on the main quest, which typically casts you as the possible cure to a terrible blight that is taking over the land. Or, you can choose to ignore the main quest and simply live as an adventurer in Vardenfell (the island province that *Morrowind* is set in), exploring its towns, dungeons, and landscape to your little medieval heart's content.

And Vardenfell is a wonder to explore. The environments are beautiful and varied enough to keep things interesting, and the artistic style of the game is unmatched in its beauty and attention to detail... but all this 3D glory comes at a price. On occasion the frame rate does some dipping and things get a big sluggish, but with all that is going on in the world you hardly notice.

Overall, the gameplay is fluid enough that the occasional glitches don't drag down our enjoyment of the game significantly. *Morrowind* is a meandering, thoughtful, exploratory experience – not a frenetic blood fest. The pace of the game reflects this, and may be a turn-off for some players, especially those more used to the spiky-haired antics of console RPGs.

The controls deserve special kudos for making all of the game's various interfaces (spell/weapon/magic inventories, etc.) accessible. Even the combat is handled well by the Xbox pad, especially considering the massive amount of keys required to maneuver around on the PC. The game can be played via a third-person view, but this view is pretty much useless during most combat.

We did have some niggles in regard to play balance – powerful items are often extremely easy to find early in the game, for example. Plus, while the game is well-populated with NPCs, they do not react to the changing day/night cycle or go about their daily business – they're always in the same places, doing the same things, whenever you show up. And the AI's path-finding abilities are often laughable – NPCs and monsters continually get stuck walking into objects they could easily sidestep, for instance. Those small things aside, though, the joy of this is that you will never be left wanting for additional content for many, many hours to come, as *Morrowind* is the Xbox equivalent of *War & Peace*.

– Steve Klett



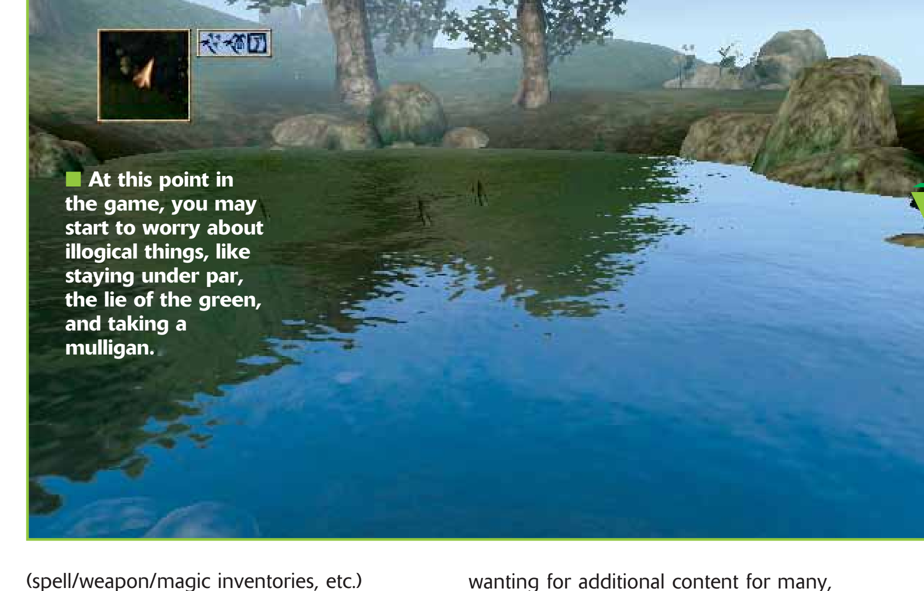
■ When the sun goes down in Vardenfell, it's time to stop and enjoy the view.



■ The towns in *Morrowind* range from hut-strewn villages to majestic castles like this one.



■ A third-person view lets you see your cool armor while bludgeoning your enemies to death.



■ At this point in the game, you may start to worry about illogical things, like staying under par, the lie of the green, and taking a mulligan.

Morrowind manifest

- ■ NPCs: 3,244
- ■ Standard-size novels' worth of text: 6
- ■ Dungeons: 300+
- ■ Hand-placed objects: 316,042
- ■ Total number of different characters you can play: 480 billion
- ■ Basic spells: 500+
- ■ Additional spells you can create: 150 billion
- ■ Number of characters in the games title: 27

THE VERDICT

Graphics
Beautiful! Incredible water effects. Character and NPC animations can be choppy.

Immersion
Fantastic control scheme, and an incredible attention to detail throughout.

Sound
Awesome! (Except for footfall and weapon-strike effects.) Particularly cool via a surround-sound system.

Design
Extremely open-ended gameplay and a few game-balance caveats.

(+) Good, (–) Bad, (?) Perplexing
+ Incredible amount of replay value.
+ Absurd amount of things to do.
– Monsters/combat somewhat repetitive.
– No construction kit.
? Is this the right type of RPG for a console?



■ **SPOON. WHY A SPOON?:** It's possible to pick up a spoon in *Morrowind* and beat an especially weak enemy to death. And because it's a spoon and not a fork or a knife, it'll hurt that much more… we assume.

■ **GETTING TO THREE:** This is the third game in the series, and the first to ever appear on a console. The previous games were *The Elder Scrolls* and *The Elder Scrolls II: Daggerfall*. By the way, "Elder Scrolls" translated is "old people paper." Thought you'd want to know.



Because cars were just meant to be wrecked

Totaled!

Challenge RU GAME
Pg. 92
Fancy yourself a bit of a *Totaled!* expert? Think you can smash 'em up with the big boys? Step on up and give it a shot. If you dare.

DEVELOPER: **RAGE** | PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO** | MULTIPLAYER: **YES** | WEBSITE: **WWW.MAJESCOGAMES.COM**

Back in 1995, *Destruction Derby* from Psygnosis was one of the more enjoyable PlayStation titles. It's a rough guess that Majesco would like to have *Totaled!* looked upon as doing the same for the Xbox.

Well, close, but no cigar.

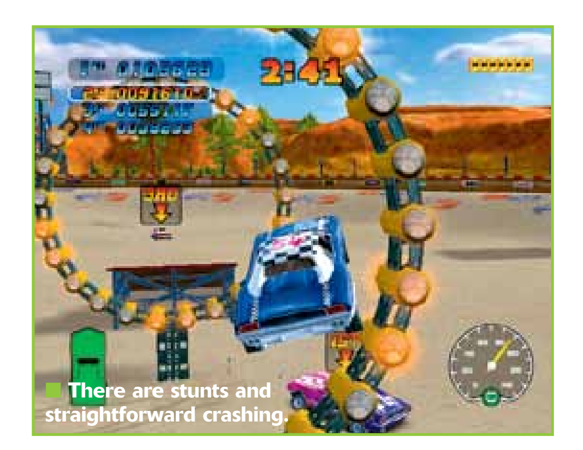
Not that there isn't fun to be had – let's face it, smashing large vehicles together is inherently appealing. There's a lot of variety, both in locations and in goals. The graphics aren't the greatest, but they're easy enough on the eyes, and the (apparently) real-time damage modeling on the cars is impressive. Literally every stage you beat unlocks something, be it additional cars or arenas, so there's a nice sense of progression and accomplishment.

But *Totaled!* takes a bit of work to get to the fun. Barriers, walls, and other cars are extremely "sticky" – expect to spend a lot of time, at least initially, getting hung up. The different goals for each stage range from freakishly difficult to laughably easy, and one or two courses (Lightning Ridge and Semara Race Arena) couldn't possibly be more frustrating if they'd been deliberately designed to be that way. And, given the pretty random nature of a demolition derby, beating a given stage is just as often a matter of dumb luck as skill.

The worst sin, however, is the appallingly long load times, not only before each event, but even when restarting the same event or just exiting to go back to the selection screen. In fact, for some stages, like the "Bull's Eye" ramp jump (time limit: 20 seconds), the loading screen actually lasts longer than the event itself.

The multiplayer options (up to four players) could make this a decent party game. However, as a single-player experience, it takes a bit too long to load and not quite enough fun.

– Jeff Lundrigan



There are stunts and straightforward crashing.



The ice affects the handling, so watch out for slides.



The demolition derby aspect is the most fun.

Drugs and demolitions

The world record for the total number of cars that were, well, totaled during the filming of a motion picture is still held – 22 years later – by 1980's *The Blues Brothers*. At least 13 different "Bluesmobiles" were sacrificed, along with anywhere from 30 to 60 other vehicles, mostly police cruisers (estimates vary, because some cars were repaired just enough to enable them to be wrecked again). A total of four different cars were used just for the Illinois Nazis' station wagon going off a bridge.

The film also, according to *Guinness*, holds the record for most drugs consumed during filming. Perhaps the two are not unrelated…

THE VERDICT

Graphics Nice damage modeling, but nothing else really stands out.

Immersion Would be a lot more immersive without the long load times.

Sound Generic "alterna-rock" soundtrack, but you can create your own.

Design A few quick, fun tracks offset the muddy, bumpy, annoying ones.

(+) Good, (–) Bad, (?) Perplexing
+ Smashing cars together is almost always cool.
+ There's a lot of variety.
– Ridiculously long and frequent load times.
? Why is every object so darn sticky?

Official Xbox magazine verdict **7.1** / 10.0



Find it hard to believe that such a silly-sounding concept is actually an incredibly deep golf sim? Well, why don't you check it out for yourself on the disc.

It's stoopid, lowbrow, childish, and… fabulous!

Outlaw Golf

DEVELOPER: **HYPNOTIX** | PUBLISHER: **SIMON & SCHUSTER INTERACTIVE**
MULTIPLAYER: **1-4 SEQUENTIAL** | WEBSITE: **WWW.OUTLAWGOLFTHEGAME.COM**

Imagine if *Hot Shots Golf* had been developed by Larry Flynt Publications, and you might have an idea of the humor and content included in this otherwise sharp-yet-strangely-normal golf game. It's filled with some of the most risqué characters, equal-opportunity stereotypes, and screwball antics ever seen in any game – let alone in a golf sim, that most genteel of pasture-pastimes.

We can't even describe some of the things that the characters do, but suffice it to say that between holes, there are fights, dances, and some of the dumbest conversations ever recorded. You can interact with fellow golfers by collecting and using fight tokens, or simply sit back and watch the occasionally salacious "plot" unfold… or should we say *undress*?

The actual golf, in case you're interested, is fun, varied, and surprisingly good. A smooth golf engine with all the usual stuff is enhanced with nice water effects, vertex-shaded grass, and plenty of options. The control method is the now familiar flick-the-stick method – pull back on the right stick to select power, and then smoothly flick it up to make a nice hook- and slice-free swing. Just like *Tiger Woods* from EA.

There are plenty of courses, and while they have some edgy elements, like freeway overpasses and bottomless canyons, they're largely normal in appearance and play. The same can be said of *Outlaw Golf*'s plentiful options, which include multiplayer (using as few or as many controllers as you like) with stroke, match, and skins play. Also fun are two unusual modes: a beat-the-clock challenge and an option to play with a putter and one other club (kind of like the goofy stuff you'd do at the end of a long golfing day). The tournament mode contains most of the drama, however.

The actual ball physics and gameplay are so normal that we wouldn't be surprised to see this engine used again in a more garden-variety golf sim, but the wild characters may bring in players who wouldn't otherwise be interested. The good news for fans of realistic golf is that you can skip any of the antics if you don't want to watch them (although girlfights are strangely hypnotic and occasionally amusing), and the whole process is quick and painless.

All in all, *Outlaw Golf* is a surprisingly fun golf game on a surprisingly golf-starved system. It's the only choice right now, but it's not a bad choice at all.

– Frank O'Connor

Using a fight token helps steady your jangled nerves, and it's fun.

Eyes on the ball!

If you can ignore the chesty damsels for a moment, you can admire the vertex-shaded grass!

THE VERDICT

Graphics Smooth and sharp, with volumetric grass!

Immersion Easy to play with limited attention span required.

Sound A bit vexing, unless you think it's funny…

Design Standard golf with lots of unusual extras.

(+) Good, (–) Bad, (?) Perplexing
+ Nice, clean Xbox graphics.
+ Great, goofy fun with the gameplay to back it up.
– Humor can be rather lowbrow.
– No Internet options.
? There are strippers on the golf course? So where's this place again?

Official Xbox magazine verdict **7.9** / 10.0

The nineteenth hole

There are a ton of options in this game: For starters, you can choose from a number of characters (complete with caddies) as well as open up new players by winning games. If you don't want to play at all, you can simply head to the driving range and practice your swing (which you'll need to do, in fact). You can see the lie of a ball on the green simply by pressing X, or hit the white button to show the topographic grid. You can see a fly-by of the course at any time, or switch the camera angle to any viewpoint. In short, this "extreme" golf game has just as many, if not more, options than the so-called serious ones.

PLEASE NOTE: Unlike in *Totaled!*, in a real destruction derby you'd spend at least half your time driving backwards, smashing opponents with the rear fender in order to protect your engine.

REAL OUTLAW GOLF: The maximum weight for a golf ball is 1.62 oz. And yet people get killed by them all the time!

Fast, furious, and faintly flawed

Test Drive



DEVELOPER **PITBULL SYNDICATE LIMITED** | PUBLISHER **ATARI/INFOGRAMES** | MULTIPLAYER **1-2** | WEBSITE **WWW.INFOGRAMES.COM** | EXTRAS **CUSTOM SOUNDTRACK**

This game has options by the dozen. The sheer number of race and driving modes is astounding, and there are plenty of tracks to drive with a ton of vehicles to choose from. Almost all modes, however, involve trying to finish first in a pack of racers while evading cops and avoiding oncoming traffic. And the Underground career mode is the deepest of the modes, with a loose plot and lots of goodies to be earned.

Quick Race lets you choose from tracks from each of the territories and simply race against computer players. This is handy if you just want to dip in and out of the game, but more importantly, it lets you get used to some of the track sections from later parts of the Underground mode. Naturally, there's a limited selection of track routes and vehicles, but you'll see a lot more a lot faster this way. Drag racing, cop chase, navigation, and circuit modes are just a few of the other available styles.

The physics are one of the game's triumphs and one of its failings, falling somewhere between *Burnout* and *Ridge Racer* on the realism scale. Huge spills can occur, with cars flipping and tumbling into the air, but hitting an oncoming vehicle or a piece of landscape can absolutely end your race, something that's incredibly frustrating when it's not thanks to your own ineptitude.

Similarly frustrating are the frequent out-of-bounds flares. One moment, you're heading along in first place – the next moment, a minor skid sends you past one of these markers and you're immediately disqualified. The tragedy is tripled when a nudge from an aggressive computer-controlled drone is the cause.

Although the game's graphics absolutely scream "PS2 port," the programmers are to be commended for an almost supernaturally smooth frame rate throughout, with nary a stutter. There are also a couple of nice Xbox touches, like particle smoke and bump-mapped tire treads when you head off-road.



Car handling is a cross between arcadey and realistic.

For the most part, *Test Drive* is more frenetic than flawed, however, and in most regards is a worthy addition to the series. With a few gameplay tweaks and some better texture work, though, it could easily have been an Xbox driving classic.

– Frank O'Connor



An AC Cobra versus a cop car. We know where our money is.

Japanese rally-prepared sports car outhandles muscle car. Surprise!



Cops will (rightfully) pull you over just for driving a Ford Mustang.

WHAT'S THAT SMELL?: During loading screens, you can play an almost impossibly tough game of *Pong*.

Do whatever a spider can!

contents

The Secrets of Spider-Man

You may have defeated the Green Goblin and saved Mary Jane, but it's unlikely that you found every secret along the way. So for your second swing through the game, come along with us and we'll help you find every secret location and gold spider icon, plus we'll explain every bonus you can earn in the game – not to mention our massive codes list featuring every cheat in the game! If this doesn't get your spider sense tingling, then we don't know what will.

Unlockable features

There's tons of cool stuff to unlock in this game. Of course, you can use the cheat codes we listed in the sidebar on page 85, but if you're into getting the most out of your games, then you'll want to beat the game and win the following rewards legitimately.

While some bonuses are unlocked by beating the game on the different difficulty levels, there is also a point system to unlock some of the game's other secrets. You earn points by meeting specific criteria in a given level, like beating the level within a set amount of time, or using no pick-ups. Check the Secrets sections of this guide to get the scoop on what you need to do on each level to get the maximum number of points. Once you beat the game, you can go into the Secrets screen to get to the Secret Store where you will find any bonuses that you have unlocked.

▼ The coolest bonus in the game is the ability to get to play as the Green Goblin with all of his weapons and his glider.

▲ Forget the bowling ball! In Pinhead Bowling, you have to swing into the pins!

10,000 points	Unlock Pinhead Bowling
20,000 points	Unlock Vulture Movie
30,000 points	Unlock Shocker Movie
50,000 points	Unlock Unlimited Webbing

Complete Easy Difficulty	Play as Peter Parker or Wrestling Spider-Man
Complete Normal Difficulty	Play as Alex Ross Spider-Man
Complete Hero Difficulty	Play as Green Goblin

Secrets, Gold Spider Icons, and Hidden Objectives

Many of the levels you will play in *Spider-Man* have hidden gold spider icons which unlock combat combos or stronger webbing powers, secret areas, secret time limits or other hidden objectives which will earn you points at the end of the level. You also earn points for level completion, beating the level perfectly. Lastly, you can earn a range of points for how stylishly you beat the level.

These points will unlock special bonus features. As well, you haven't truly beaten this game until you get the maximum points possible for each level. To make this goal a little more possible, we've detailed all the secret point earning objectives and the locations of all the gold spider icons found in each level. Do you have what it takes to truly conquer *Spider-Man*?

■ **GLAND FEVER:** All spiders have silk glands, even the ones that don't actually spin webs. It's just a fundamental part of being a spider, we guess.

Level 1 - Hunt For Revenge

Secret Point Earning Objectives

■ **Combat Objective:** Kill 15 Thugs.

■ **Secret Objective:** Save Woman and return her purse. She is located on a rooftop to the left of the level's starting position. It's the tallest building to your left with the orange-ish windows. Once you beat up the thugs harassing her, you will need to find her purse. It is on another rooftop nearby. Jump from the opposite side of the building, keeping the water on your left, and swing to the shorter building with the Latvania billboard.



▶ Hidden secrets like the woman you find on a rooftop in the first level are part of what makes this game worth playing.

Hidden Gold Spider Icons



■ The first icon is found directly under the perch you start the level from.

■ The second icon is behind a wall on top of a building near the tallest building in the level. When you get to it, look to the right, toward the nearest water. There will be two tall buildings between you and the water on your right and left. Swing to the building on the right and find the icon over a wall on the roof in the corner nearest the tallest building.

Level 2 - Warehouse Hunt

Secret Point Earning Objectives

■ **Stealth Objective:** Once you enter the Chop Shop, Zip up to the ceiling and go toward the right-hand wall with the door next to the silver garage door. You will see a beam along the wall that runs straight down, crawl down the right side in the shadow, and use the underside of the catwalks to crawl above the garage door on the left side of the little door. When the thug in the red jacket is on the other side of the room, drop down to open the garage door and Zip Line all the way to the end of the hall and get back into the shadows. Just kill the four thugs and get to the cut-scene to complete the stealth objective.

■ **Secret Objective:** Find the hidden power-up in the hallway on the other side of the Chop Shop you complete the Stealth Objective in. It is behind a bunch of wooden crates between two walls with graffiti.

Hidden Gold Spider Icons

The only icon for this level is an easy find in the stairwell near the start of the level.

Level 3 - Birth of a Hero

Secret Point Earning Objectives

■ **Time Objective:** Beat the level within the following time limits depending on your difficulty level.

Easy Level	900 Seconds
Normal Level	500 Seconds
Hero/Super Hero Level	300 Seconds

■ **Secret Objective:** To earn the secret objective, you need to use stealth on the ceiling in the first warehouse you come to after entering the vents. You will need to sneak across the warehouse without being seen and reach the door next to the hallway with the steam. If you make it unseen the room, it will have a Gold Spider Icon inside that enables the Advanced Web Dome power. If you are seen, the room will be holding some thugs.

Hidden Gold Spider Icons

■ The first Icon is earned by completing the Secret Objective.

■ The second Icon is easy to find in the small room at the end of the hallway with the hazardous steam.

DIRTY CHEATS

RalliSport Challenge

All Bonus Cars

To unlock the hidden cars you find in the game enter the Credits Screen and enter the following button combinations.

Code	Car
← ← A → →	Citroen Xsara
← ↑ ← A ←	Nissan Micra
→ ← A ↓ ↓	Ford RS200
↓ → A A →	Renault 5
↑ ↓ ↓ → A	Saab Viggen

Unlock All Levels

Having trouble unlocking some of the later levels? Well, this should help out a bit. Enter the following cheats into the Create a Profile screen to unlock the various levels in the game. The names you enter are case sensitive, so be sure enter them as you see them here.

Profile Name	Level
WheelToWheel	Expert
TheGoodStuff	Classic
NoHoldsBarred	Unlimited
TheLongHaul	Endurance
Geronimo	Geronimo

Spider-Man

Alternate Outfits

There are several hidden characters to play as in the game, but to access them you'll need the cheats. You enter all of the following into the Cheats Screen found in the Specials Menu. The Green Goblin will laugh when you enter a cheat correctly.

Hidden Outfit	Cheat
Shocker Skin	HERMANSCHULTZ
Scientist Skin	SERUM
Thug Skin	KNUCKLES
Spike Skin	STICKYRICE
Shocker Thug Skin	THUGSRUS
Helicopter Cop Skin	CAPTAINSTACEY
Old Supersoldier Skin	FREAKOUT
Cop Skin	REALHERO
Mary Jane Skin	GIRLNEXTDOOR

Cheat Codes

The following gameplay cheats are entered into the Cheat Screen found in the Specials Menu. When you enter a cheat correctly you will hear the Green Goblin Laugh. To cancel a cheat's effect simply re-enter the cheat.

Effect	Cheat
Unlimited Webbing	ORGANICWEBBING
Unlock All Combos	KOALA
Unlock All Levels	IMIARMAS
Bullet Time Mode	DODGETHIS
Big Head Thugs	JOELSPEANUTS
Micro Spidey	SPIDERBYTE
Big Head And Feet Spidey	GOESTOYOURHEAD
First Person Mode	UNDERTHEMASK
Bonus Training Levels	HEADEXPLODY
Unlock All Levels, Combos, Vulture and Shocker Movies	ARACHNID

Play as the Green Goblin!

This is one of the coolest bonuses in the entire game. You can play as the Green Goblin (actually his son Harry, dressed up in his father's Goblin outfit) for the entire game. The story line will be slightly different, but you will have access to all the Goblin's powers and even his glider. You can open this character by beating the game on the Hero difficulty or you can do the following:

Start the game on hard or super hero difficulty and get into the first level and then use the pause menu and quit out to the main shell. Enter the ARACHNID cheat in the cheats menu which will open up all the levels. Now use the Level Warp option to go to the conclusion level. This is only the final cinematic where Norman reveals himself to Spidey and is taken out by the glider. When you play this cinematic, you have essentially beaten the game on

■ **BLACK WIDOW EXAGGERATION:** The venomous Black Widow spider isn't as dangerous as its rep suggests, with fewer than five deaths per year attributed to them -- and those tend to be allergic reactions to the venom.

DIRTY CHEATS

whatever difficulty you chose at the beginning. Go back to the main menu and enter the Secret Store. Turn on the Green Goblin. Finally use Level Warp or just start a new game and you will be playing as the Green Goblin. You will be playing at whatever difficulty you chose at step one unless you choose to start a new game and select a new difficulty.

WWF Raw

Hidden Wrestlers

The four hidden wrestlers in the game are Shane McMahon, Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley, Vince McMahon, and Fred Durst. There are no cheats to unlock them but they can be unlocked by beating different titles. The following are the titles you need to win to unlock the various hidden wrestlers.

Wrestler	Title to Win
Shane McMahon	Hardcore Title
Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley	Women's Title
Vince McMahon	Heavyweight Title
Fred Durst	Win All Championship Belts

Secret Items

There are tons of items in the game to unlock that you can use when you create a wrestler. The way you unlock them is to pick them up during a match. Some things can be used as weapons and some items only become available after you break them by throwing an opponent into them or by repeatedly using them. You can also interrupt an opponent's entrance and acquire items they are wearing or carrying with them. Lastly, there are boxes that you can lift up to reveal items near the top of the ramp and you can also earn items by winning title matches.

Items List

American Indian
Announcer Tables (5)
APA Foam
Army Hat
Ashtray
Banana
Bandannas (5)
Barb Wire 2X4
Baseball Bats (2)
Baseball Cap
Baseball Helmet
Batons
Bazooka
Bell
Bowling Ball
Broken Chairs (6)
Broken Tables (2)
Broom
Brush
Bubba Ray Glasses
Bullets
Cactus
Cardboard Box
Cell Phone
Chair Seats (3)
Cheesehead
Chef Hat
Christian's Shades
Cigar
Coat Hangers
Headphones
Cowboy Hat
Crown
Dartboard
Doctor's Mask
Drumsticks
Dudley's Foam
D-Von's Glasses
Edge's Glasses
European Belt
Exhaust Pipe
Eye Patch
Fighting Sticks
File Cabinet
Fire Extinguisher
Frying Pan
Gas Mask
Giant Tuna
Glasses (2)
Gold Club
Gold Medals (2)
Gold Necklace
Golf Club
Half Mask
Hardcore Belt
Hardy's Foam
Hat
Head
Heart Glasses
Heavyweight Belt
Hero Belt
Itc Belt
Japanese Hats (2)
Judge Gavel
Kane's Mask
Kendo Stick
Knife and Fork
Ladder
LHW Belt
Long Steel Pipe
Mankind's Mask
Mexican Hat
Microphones (3)
Military Helmet
Miner Helmet
Moppy
Motorcycle Handle
Motorcycle Tire
Parrot
Pineapple
Plants (2)
Plastic Hand
Playing Card
Plunger
Portrait
Pumpkin
Putter
Python
Ring Stairs (3)
Rock's Foam
Rock's Shades
Santa Hat
Saturn's Hat
Scale
Short Steel Pipe
Showerhead
Silver Necklace
Sledgehammer
Slippers
Snowboard
Soda Bottle
Soda Cans (3)
Soda Mug
Spike's Glasses
Spiked Belt
Spiked Collar
Steel Chairs (6)
Steering Wheel
Stick
Stone Cold's Hats (2)
Stop Sign
Storage Box
Strap
Stuffed Animal
Swan Belt
Tables (2)
Television
Trashcans (2)
Trashcan Lid
Triple H's Hat
Trophy
Turban
Twisted Towel
Umbrellas (2)
Undertaker's Shades
Venetian Collar
Video Camera
Viking Helmet
Water Bottle
Watermelon
Weights (2)
Women's Belt
Wooden Crate
Wooden Sticks (2)
Wool Hat
Wrench
X-Ray Glasses

Level 4 - Oscorp's Gambit

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Combat Objective: Destroy five HKs when playing on the Hero or Superhero difficulty levels.



▲The game tells you that you need to stick to the main objective. If you want to meet the Combat Objective, ignore it and destroy five HKs.

Level 5 - The Subway Station

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Secret Time Objective: Beat the level within 120 seconds to earn the points for this objective.



Hidden Gold Spider Icons

To find the first hidden icon, go to the wall opposite the wall with the escalators. Along this wall there will be two sub levels. Jump into the left sub level to find the icon hanging in mid air.

The second icon is found by first going to the clock kiosk in the center of the building. Then, with the escalators on your left, go to the far end of the building and go down the stairs. Look up and to the left to find the icon hanging in the corner.

Level 6 - Chase Through the Sewer

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective: Beat the level within the following time limits depending on your difficulty level.

Easy Level	800 Seconds
Normal Level	600 Seconds
Hero/Super Hero Level	400 Seconds

Secret Objective: Unlock the secret room at the bottom of the pipe valve room with the gold Advanced Web Gloves icon.

Combat Objective: Kill the following amounts of thugs depending on your difficulty level.

Easy Level	30 Thugs
Normal/Hero/Super Hero Level	40 Thugs

Hidden Gold Spider Icons

The first icon is an easy find above the pipe that Shocker ran through with the rushing water.

The second icon is in a secret room that also satisfies the Secret Objective. To unlock it, first shut off the water so you can go down the pipe after Shocker. Then in the next room, exit the pipe to the left and climb the left wall to find an alcove with a room with a switch. Hit the switch and return the way you came back down the pipe. When you reach the room with the water valve, drop down and inside is the gold icon that gives you Advanced Web Gloves.

The third icon is found in the sewer area where you get locked in. After you beat all the thugs, you will get a key. Drop down to the dry area and use the key on the doors found there. Behind one of the doors is the gold icon that gives you the Advanced Impact Web power.

Level 7 - Showdown With Shocker

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective: Beat the level within the following time limits depending on your difficulty level.

Easy Level	500 Seconds
Normal Level	250 Seconds
Hero/Super Hero Level	120 Seconds

Secret Objective... Grab the floating gold spider icon after you move the subway car.



Hidden Gold Spider Icons

The only icon to find on this level is really tricky to grab but doing so will fulfill the Secret Objective for the level. After you dodge Shocker's blasts and move the subway car to clear the way through, run up the stairs and quickly drop into the water to grab the icon floating by. You may have to jump and Zipline to the end to catch up to it.

Level 8 - Vulture's Lair

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective: Beat the level within 240 seconds on any difficulty level.



Hidden Gold Spider Icons

Find the icon in an area above the flaming, swinging beam. You will have to drop through one of the broken staircases to be able to make it around to the icon's location.

Level 9 - Vulture Escapes

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective: Beat the level within 300 seconds on any difficulty level.

Vulture Proximity Objective: Stay within 30 meters of the Vulture for four seconds.

Level 10 - Aerial Duel with Vulture

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective: Beat the level within 120 seconds on any difficulty level.



Hidden Gold Spider Icons

There is one on a corner ledge of the building you fight around. Just cruise around the building to find it.

Level 11 - Corralled

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Secret Objective: Find hidden gold spider icon.

Protect Scorpion Objective: Beat the all the spider robots with Scorpion's health above 50%.



Hidden Gold Spider Icons

Find the gold spider icon on the ramp going between the second and third floors. The icon activates the Advanced Web Dome power and finding it satisfies the Secret Objective for the level.

Level 12 - Scorpion's Rampage

Secret Point Earning Objectives

No Pick-ups Objective: Beat the level without using a single health or web power-up.



Hidden Gold Spider Icons

The icon is found floating above the damaged pillar.

Level 13 - Coup D'Etat

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective:

Easy Level	480 Seconds
Normal Level	350 Seconds
Hero/Super Hero Level	270 Seconds



Hidden Gold Spider Icons

You find the gold spider icon at the beginning of the level. After you drop off Mary at the drop-off point, climb to the top of the attached building. On the roof will be a heli-pad and in the center will be the icon.

Level 14 - The Offer

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective: Any level in 400 seconds.

Ride Goblin Objective: Jump onto the Goblin's Glider three times or more. Do this by line breaking during a swing or jumping and hold down the A button as you come down.



▲When you land on the Goblin's glider, you can get a few hits in before he throws you off.



Hidden Gold Spider Icons

After wearing down some of Goblin's health in the air, he will crash through the roof of a building. Inside will be two doors and in front of one of them will be a gold icon.

SILKY DRAW: The silk of a spider, in relation to its thickness, is actually much stronger than steel, so Spider-Man's web shooters don't seem quite so far-fetched now, do they?

WAR ON TUFFET: It turns out that Little Miss Muffet was actually a real-life girl, the daughter of an English quack who fed her crushed spider parts about two hundred years ago as a cure for the common cold.

Level 15 - Race Against Time

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective: Beat the level within the following time limits depending on your difficulty level.

Normal Level	210 Seconds
Hero/Super Hero Level	170 Seconds

Level 16 - Kraven's Test

Secret Point Earning Objectives

There are no Secret Objectives or Gold Spider Icons to find in this level.

Level 17 - The Mighty Hunter

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective: Beat the level within the following time limits depending on your difficulty level.

Easy Level	700 Seconds
Normal Level	600 Seconds
Hero/Super Hero Level	500 Seconds

Secret Objective: Find the Gold Spider Icon.

Hidden Gold Spider Icons

The Gold Spider Icon is found in the air vents. After you drop into the snake pit or go down the stairs to the lower level, you will come across a room with two power-ups that will fill with poison gas. Climb into the air vents and you should find three different ways to go. One of the directions will take you to the icon while the other two take you back to the main room.

Level 18 - The Razor's Edge

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Razor Bats Destroyed Objective: Destroy at least 75 Razor Bats.

• Remaining Health Objective: Complete the level with above a certain amount of health depending on the difficulty level.

Easy Level	37% Health
Normal Level	50% Health
Hero/Super Hero Level	75% Health

Pick-ups Used: Depending on the difficulty, you must beat the level using less than a certain number of pick-ups.

Easy Level	No more than 2
Normal Level	No more than 3
Hero/Super Hero Level	No more than 5



Spider-Man didn't start out with a fancy outfit, he had to make his own out of some old sweaters and stuff. Luckily you get to relive that scenario in the game.

Level 19 - Breaking and Entering

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective: Beat the level within the following time limits depending on your difficulty level.

Easy Level	480 Seconds
Normal Level	350 Seconds
Hero/Super Hero Level	240 Seconds

Secret Objective: After you make your way through the first hallway at the beginning of the level you'll find yourself in a room next to a short hall with some elevators. Enter the far-left elevator to achieve the Secret Objective.

Stealth Objective: Make it through the level without setting off the alarm.



Hidden Gold Spider Icons

The icon for this level is found between cubicles in the first room with computers. It's to the left of the cubicle where you find the first piece of the code.

Level 20 - Chemical Chaos

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective: Beat the level within 400 seconds on any difficulty level.



Hidden Gold Spider Icons

The first icon is found just after you activate the A and B switches and the AB switch. It is on the ceiling before the door leading to the next area where you will eventually find the C and D switches.

The second icon is an easy grab in a room across from the rooms holding the C and D switches.

Level 21 - Oscorp's Ultimate Weapon

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Time Objective: Beat the level within 400 seconds on any difficulty level.

Level 22 - Escape From Oscorp

Secret Point Earning Objectives

Supersoldiers Killed Objective: Destroy 10 or more Supersoldiers to meet this secret objective.



Hidden Gold Spider Icons

The first icon is placed in plain view between the two cubicle areas. Just go straight from where you start to find it.

The second icon found in the level is on the conference table. To find it disable all the energy barriers, laser wall and defenses and go through the now open passage that leads to a dead end in the left cubicle area.

Level 23 - Mary Jane Kidnapped and Level 23 - Faceoff at the Bridge

Secret Point Earning Objectives

There are no Secret Objectives or Gold Spider Icons to find in these levels.

BALLOONATICS: Baby spiders that "balloon," that is, use a small strand of silk as a kind of kite to disperse from their webs, can reach enormous altitudes and survive being frozen at the upper reaches of the atmosphere. They thaw when they land.

Reader Interaction

This is the place where we get to answer the hard questions from you, the readers. But there's no possible way we can answer your questions if you don't keep sending them through. We especially like questions about games and the games industry. So try to keep the marriage proposals to our associate art director, Juliann Brown, down to a minimum. Send your electronic inquiries to us at xboxmag@imaginemedia.com. Or you can mail your love through the post to: Official Xbox Magazine, c/o Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005.

Fab four

1) Is anyone ever going to make games out of some of the old cartoons such as *Voltron*, *Thundercats*, *GI Joe*, or *Transformers*? These cartoons seem to scream out for cel-shaded game adaptations.
2) Are there any cheats or codes for *James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire*?
3) I have seen adapters on the Internet that allow you to use a PS2 controller on your Xbox. Where can I find one?
4) Is there any chance that Xbox is ever going to have the capability to burn CDs?

David Edwards II
Bixby, Missouri



We say:
1) *None of the series you mention have been publicly secured for videogame adaptations. This isn't to say that somewhere down the line, they won't be, but you're right: cel-shading is built for licenses like the ones you listed.*
2) *Unfortunately, right now there aren't any button-press codes for* Agent Under Fire. *There are plenty of tips and secrets to be had in the game, but no real codes for stuff like invincibility. But stay tuned, because some may surface in the future.*
3) *Level Six makes an adapter (shown above) that allows you use your PS/PS2 controller on your Xbox. It's very cheap, to boot! Check out the company's website (you can order it online, as well) at www.levelsix.com.*
4) *The short (and only) answer is no.*

Knight time

I have a few questions about *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*.
1) Is there a specific date set yet for *KOTOR*'s release?
2) In the *KOTOR* feature in the April issue of your magazine, it says that you will be able to modify and create your own lightsabers. Will you also be able to modify or create any other weapons, like blasters? How about creating bots?
3) Will there be any other games like *KOTOR* on Xbox? I think these games will sell like hotcakes!
4) Will there be any multiplayer support or System Link/online options in *KOTOR*?

Nicolas
Via email

We say:
1) *"Fall" is what they tell us. This usually means sometime between September 1 and December 24.*
2) *As far as we know, Nicolas, all weapons in the game are upgradeable and can most likely be modified. In regards to "bots," we're assuming you mean droids? If so, then yes indeed: all characters in the game are upgradeable to a certain degree.*
3) *Currently, the only other RPGs slated for Xbox in the US are* Project Ego *(code name),* Gladius, *and* Morrowind. *And there will be plenty more to come.*
4) *Right now,* KOTOR *is being designed primarily as a single-player game. An incredibly deep and engaging one, at that.*

Pucks 'n' guns

I know *House of the Dead 3* is coming out, but where are the lightguns? I tried to find out if Mad Catz or Interact would make one, but I haven't had any luck. Do you know of any coming for Xbox?

Also, I'm a big hockey fan and it seems as if EA is the only company to release a hockey title for Xbox. Will Black Box or Visual Concepts be making any this year?

Dylan Lu
Athens, GA

We say: *Currently, we haven't heard of any lightguns coming out for Xbox, but we're pretty sure that once* House of the Dead 3 *ships, one of the third-party peripheral makers will release one. No one's talking currently about doing so. The answer to your hockey question is a bit more positive, because all forthcoming Sega Sports titles, including* NHL 2K3, *will be coming to the 'Box. At the recent E3 trade show, we had a chance to play the game and it is shaping up very nicely.*

The hard cel

Why are there so many cel-shaded games coming out? Personally, I think it takes away from the realism that most people like in games. I noticed that the new *Robotech: Battle Cry* game coming to Xbox had cel-shading in the June 2002 issue, and all I could think was, come on! I realize what Producer Eric Petersen was saying about trying to mimic *Robotech*'s animation style, but it would be so much better if it wasn't cel-shaded. I mean, what's the point of having an awesome console like the Xbox if you don't use all the power that it has to offer? If a lot of the games being made are cel-shaded, what's the point of having an Xbox when you can make all the cel-shaded games you want on the older consoles, like Dreamcast?

Jarrod Bogard
Via email

We say: *We can understand your stance, Jarrod, but a company's decision to use cel-shading in a game is usually a style choice, not a statement on the power of the hardware. Some developers use cel-shading to make their games mimic animated licenses, such as* Robotech, *or to give the visuals a more pseudo-2D look to mimic comics or manga, such as in the case of* JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future. *And if you compare cel-shaded games on platforms such as Dreamcast or PS2, you'll notice that there's a huge leap in quality and detail to those on Xbox. So, Jarrod, don't think of cel-shading as a statement on how much power a system has to offer, but a testament to how much creative freedom a developer has to realize a vision for their game. Thankfully, the Xbox can completely support this.*

You say goodbye and I say Halo

1) Do you know how to get the Banshee on the Silent Cartographer level in *Halo*? It shows you a picture of the Master Chief in a Banshee on that level on the back of the Halo box, so I'm wondering if you know how to get it.
2) I heard of an invincibility cheat for *Halo*. If you begin a cooperative game and blow up Captain Keyes with a grenade, then blow yourself up (along with the other player) with another grenade, then finish the level, the Invincibility cheat is accessible on the second stage. Is this true?
3) I also heard there were two new weapons available if you beat the game on any difficulty, then complete Legendary mode in three hours or less. I've been told that you get a timed bomb and a guided missile launcher. Is this true?

Gary Ingalls
Via email

Cel-shading is usually a style choice, not a statement on the power of the hardware.

We say:
Halo? We love Halo!
1) *Sorry to say, Gary, there's no way to control a Banshee on Silent Cartographer. Mainly because there is no Banshee on Silent Cartographer. The picture must have been from an early, unfinished build of the game.*
2) *No such thing, unfortunately.*
3) *Ditto for any secret weapons.*

Flaming blood cables

1) What is broadband? Is it a cable connection or something?
2) Why did you guys cut the blood out of the *Max Payne* demo?
3) Why did they can the idea for the flame-thrower and a bunch more weapons in *Halo*? Will you be able to download them off the Internet in the future or something?

Dave Kostyk
Via email

We say:
1) *Broadband is the term used collectively for high-speed Internet connections (such as cable, DSL, or a T1 line) and also refers to the amount of bandwidth your connection is able to support.*
2) *We didn't remove the blood from the* Max Payne *demo, Rockstar did. And most likely they did so to let the maximum amount of gamers mess around with the demo without having to card people at the Kiosk.*
3) *Unfortunately, there were a lot of features that didn't make it into the final version of* Halo *due to constraints on time and resources. There just wasn't enough time to integrate these weapons or features into* Halo *if the game were to ship by the date that it did.*

Qs for As

I have a couple of questions:
1) There seem to be a lot of first-person shooters coming out for Xbox later this year. Is there going to be an Xbox mouse-and-keyboard-type of control to accommodate these games?
2) Are there going to be any more booster-type discs for games other than *DOA3*?
3) Would it be possible to take out the Intel Pentium III 733MHz chip and replace it with a Pentium IV 1.8 GHz chip?
4) What *Star Wars* games are coming out? Any like *Rogue Squadron*?

Sean Queenan
Via email

We say:
1) *Microsoft has no plans to release any sort of mouse-and-keyboard package peripheral for Xbox. And with the success of* Halo's *use of the controller, we don't see any need for one just yet, either.*
2) *We're hoping that more publishers and developers utilize the Xbox hard drive with booster discs like the one we had for* DOA3. *We're preaching the value of this to publishers and should start seeing the fruits of our labor sometime later this year. We can't wait.*
3) *Um, no.*
4) *So far,* KOTOR, Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast, *and* Galaxies *are the upcoming games in the group. We don't really think* Rogue Squadron *will come to Xbox, but who cares? We have the best* Star Wars *lineup of any system.*

Sound tracking

How can I get my hands on the *Onimusha* soundtrack you mentioned in the May 2002 issue? And how do you import music CDs into the Xbox HD to play different music during games?

David Pugnet
Margate, FL

We say: *David, you can purchase the* Onimusha *soundtrack directly from TokyoPOP, its distributor, by visiting their website at www.tokyopop.com, or you can find it on a large retail site such as amazon.com. As for ripping music off of CDs, it's easy. Simply pop in an audio CD and copy it over to your Xbox HD. In order to play it during a game, the game has to have the option to do so. Only a handful have this feature, so check which game you want to do this with and that game's specific manual.*



Show us your unit!

In response to the "Customize your Xbox" feature that ran in our May 2002 issue, readers tried some of the techniques out for themselves and showed us the proof. Check 'em out!

Legend
(1) Tim Farber (2) Trevor Mann (Wawa, Ontario, Canada) **(3) Greg H. Szeyko III (4) Walter Bradford** (Middleboro, MA) **(5) Jorin Leija** (Texas) **(6) Sean Donohue (7) Carl Rathbun (8) Trent Thorne (9) Evan Archibald (10) Colin R. Crouch** (Toddville, MD)

■ YET ANOTHER WARNING: Remember folks, if you open your Xbox to customize it in any way, you'll void the warranty. So we don't suggest that you try it unless you're so rich that you have whole closets full of monocles and top hats.

■ POP 'N' MUSIC: TokyoPOP, the distributor of a large number of game soundtracks (among other things) is also planning on releasing the soundtrack for *Gunvalkyrie*. For more information, check out their website at www.tokyopop.com.

LESS TALK... MORE WALK

Every single time you start talking games with another gamer, they are all like, "Yeah, I already beat that game and unlocked the secret Viper Dragon." Well, we're here to tell you that there is no Viper Dragon in any game and that the gaming scum you were talking to is just trying to look good. If you're tired of hearing people talk the talk, then we're ready to let YOU walk the walk. Beating the **Official Xbox Magazine** Challenges is irrefutable proof that you've got mad gaming skillz and anybody who actually makes it into our top 10 is a true legend. Are you good enough to make it in? Or are you just another one of those talkers... bring it.

THE OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE CHALLENGES

Crashing without the Bandicoot

Totaled!



ELITE POINTS:
5,000 (5,000 bonus)

CHALLENGE:
Defeat the opponent in Event A at Calcutta Car Park in under one minute. We've done it in one and a half minutes, but we have real lives and jobs. Surely one of you "real" gamers can do better.

PROOF:
A picture of the timer when the level is finished. It counts in reverse, so it should read two minutes left or more. Don't try fooling us, we're nobody's fools... mostly.

EXTRA CREDIT:
Think that's tough? Well, try this one out. Leap 12 buses in Career Event A (Lena Valley Leap) and we'll hit you with another 5,000. Anyone can do eleven, but the twelfth requires extreme skill.

Protect, serve, and smash to bits!

Test Drive





ELITE POINTS:
5,000 (3,000 bonus)

CHALLENGE:
Easily the best mode in *Test Drive* is Cop Chase, where you get to be the cop. Get out your aviators, grow a mustache, and see if you can arrest (umm... smash up) all six cars on the San Francisco 13 track in under 1:14. It ain't easy, but Mike Salmon did it and you guys love beating him.

PROOF:
A picture of the screen that shows the time of each arrest, with the sixth (and final) arrest showing a 1:14 or under time.

EXTRA CREDIT:
When the game loads you get to take on the computer in *Pong*. Shut it out 9-0, take a picture, and you get more points.

Record-breaking round

Outlaw Golf

ELITE POINTS:
5,000 (2,000 bonus)

CHALLENGE:
Golf is a sport steeped in tradition, politics, and stuffiness. The best 18-hole round ever recorded in the PGA is a 59... not bad. Now let's see if you can take on of the hooligans in *Outlaw Golf* and beat that record. You'll be surprised how well this game actually plays... and after a while you'll totally forget that your golfer is a stripper.

PROOF:
Take a picture of the post-round screen showing your record-breaking goodness.

EXTRA CREDIT:
Pull off this incredible feat with Summer (the stripper) just to mess with the staid society of golf and we'll give you a bonus.

Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller

TAXI CAB CONFESSIONS IV: ALL IS FARE IN LOVE AND CABS

Demo Challenge

ELITE POINTS: 3,000
CHALLENGE: Put in our demo disc and play the amazing demo of *Crazy Taxi 3* (out a full month before the game releases... how ya like that), now see if you can get a Class A license on Glitter Oasis (the one playable level).
PROOF: Take a pic. You know the dealio.

Outlaw Golf

HOLE IN ONE...

Demo Challenge

ELITE POINTS: 5,000
CHALLENGE: Pop the **Official Xbox Magazine** disc into your Xbox and start playing with the insanely fun *Outlaw Golf* demo. Now, see if you can get a hole-in-one on one of the par threes.
PROOF: A replay would be cool, but you could just nab a picture of the scorecard showing your ace.

STILL PLAYING

The deadline for all challenges is November 1, 2002 (unless noted). At that point, we will determine our year-end champion and dole out credit to the best of the best. Of course, that isn't the end since we'll be starting up again for another season. Good luck.

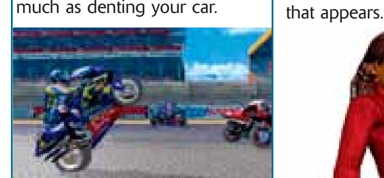


Burnout
ELITE POINTS: 3,000 (1,000)
CHALLENGE: Pull off a $150,000 crash.
PROOF: Pic of damage total.
EXTRA CREDIT: Get through the entire race without so much as denting your car.

Crash Bandicoot (demo)
ELITE POINTS: 1,000
CHALLENGE: Crash every single crate on both levels of our demo.
PROOF: Picture of the gem that appears.

007 Agent Under Fire
ELITE POINTS: 2,000 (1,000)
CHALLENGE: Get Platinum on every level.
PROOF: A picture showing the mess you've created.
EXTRA CREDIT: Get Platinum on any driving level.

Gunvalkyrie
ELITE POINTS: 10,000 (1,000)
CHALLENGE: Get an S ranking on everything.
PROOF: A picture will do.
EXTRA CREDIT: Get a D ranking for everything. We reward mediocrity.



MotoGP (demo)
ELITE POINTS: 3,000
CHALLENGE: Take a spin in this Xbox stunner and best Mike Salmon's 1:45 to humiliate him and get points.
PROOF: Take a pic of the screen that shows it.

Hunter: The Reckoning
ELITE POINTS: 3,000 (3,000)
CHALLENGE: Finish the game and unlock Nightmare and alternate costumes.
PROOF: Pics.
EXTRA CREDIT: Do it with 4.

Project Gotham (perfect run)
ELITE POINTS: 5,000
CHALLENGE: Beat Mike Salmon's perfect run, if you actually can.
PROOF: Picture of post-race screen will do.

Halo #6
ELITE POINTS: 5,000 (10,000)
CHALLENGE: Get up to the unreachable hill on Silent Cartographer.
PROOF: Pic will do.
EXTRA CREDIT: Take a ride on the alien dropship.

Star Wars Jedi Starfighter
ELITE POINTS: 5,000
CHALLENGE: Play through the game and open up every single bonus level and area.
PROOF: Take pictures of the screens that will prove you have done it.

World Series Baseball
ELITE POINTS: 5,000 (5,000)
CHALLENGE: Hit 74 homers with anyone except Barry.
PROOF: Pictures, my friend.
EXTRA CREDIT: Go yard 74 times with the relatively light-hitting Derek Jeter.

Dead or Alive 3 (demo)
ELITE POINTS: 1,000 (2,000)
CHALLENGE: Get through four fights in under 2 minutes.
PROOF: Picture of the time rankings screen should do.
EXTRA CREDIT: Do it all in 1:30.

Official Xbox Magazine
ELITE POINTS: 5,000
CHALLENGE: Loyalty. You and five friends all buying the same issue rather than reading each others' illegally.
PROOF: Picture of each of you holding a copy of the same issue, and smiling.

THE CLASSIC CHALLENGES

HALO: Beat the game on Legendary (1,000).
HALO#2: Cram every vehicle into one base (500).
HALO#3: Get a Scorpion Tank inside the base (5,000).
HALO#4: Stack 15 Master Chiefs on top of each other (1,000). Blow them up (1,000).
HALO#5: Launch a ghost across Sidewinder (5,000) and land it on a chump (5,000).

PGR: 2,400 on very hard NY (1,000), with a Camaro (500).
PGR DEMO: 2,020 Kudos (1,000), with a Ferrari (1,000).
AMPED: Get 5k points (1,000) and 3k media (1,000).
AMPED#2: Get a ranking of #1 (2,00) or right at #75 (500)
DAVE MIRRA 2: Do a 35-trick combo (1,000) or a suicide triple backflip 900 (1,000).
NFL FEVER: Get Mike Salmon in the Hall of Fame (1,000) as a punter (500).

JSRF: Unlock all characters (3,000) and "thing" (1,000).
JSRF (DEMO): Get under 1:40 in race with Beat (2,000).
NFL FEVER#2: Get the most lopsided score (2,000).
BLOOD WAKE: Beat the game on Admiral (1,000).
MAD DASH (DEMO): Score a total time of 2:44 (1,000).
MUNCH'S ODDYSEE: Get Angelic Quarma (2,000) or Black Quarma (2,000).
RALLISPORT: Beat the whole game on normal (5,000) and unlock all 29 cars (1,000).

RALLISPORT (DEMO): Beat a time of 1:49:95 on Vista Peak Ridge (2,000).
TONY HAWK 3: Unlock a secret Xbox-only character (1,000) or all of them (1,000).
WRECKLESS: Finish the photo level with 60 seconds left (1,000) and jump a double-decker bus (1,000).
WRECKLESS (DEMO): Create the most stunning replay (5,000).

Please allow time for us to receive and process entries.

CONTEST WINNERS

Blood Omen 2 Caption Contest
(May 2002, Issue #06)

Grand Prize Winner
Robert Pascocello, Valley Stream, NY



Robert wins:
- One brand new Xbox console
- One copy of *Blood Omen 2* for Xbox
- One autographed *Blood Omen 2* poster signed by the development team.

Runners-up
- **Wes Duellman**, Rochester, MN



- **Frank H. Rivers**, Charleston, SC
- **Justin Biller**, Luneneburg, MA
- **Andrew Aiello**, Arlington Heights, IL
- **Ed Webb**, Visalia, CA

Runners-up win:
- One copy of *Blood Omen 2* for Xbox
- One autographed *Blood Omen 2* poster signed by the development team.

HOW DO YOU RANK?

Been busting your butt to complete the **Official Xbox Magazine** challenges? Have no idea if we've even received them? Well, my friend, your troubles are over. We have partnered with the fine folks at Team Xbox to bring you a complete list of every single person who has ever completed a challenge (that includes you!). Want to know your score? Simply log on to http://oxm.teamxbox.com, type in your name, and voila!

Go see your totals at:
http://oxm.teamxbox.com

teamxbox.com



The only place you'll find a monthly preview of the magazine and the names of all the challenge leaders. Plus they are host to the Official... umm... Official Xbox Magazine forums. Check 'em out today.

PROVE IT

Send video or pictures (and include your full name and where you come from) to:

**I'm a Legend
C/o Official Xbox Magazine
150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, CA 94005**

Or electronically with the header "I'm a Legend" to xboxmag@imaginemedia.com.

PS: Use the header I'm a Legend (spelled right) or your entry will *not* make it in.

■ **GOTTA RECOGNIZE:** Five golfers (David Duval, Chip Beck, Al Geiberger, Doug Dunakey, and Notah Begay) have managed to score a 59 (the lowest score ever). It was beaten by Shigeki Maruyama of Japan, when he scored a 58... but since it was a qualifier it didn't count.

■ **ONLY GONNA TO GET BETTER:** If you like the Challenges, just wait until Xbox Live is up and running. We have some big things planned that will really test your skills against other readers. We want to create a competitive and friendly world of Xbox gamers.

HOT, HOT, HOT!

Who loves ya? We do. And this month's spectacular Xbox Game Disc is proof of that! With sizzling hot demos of some of the latest, greatest, and even unreleased (!) games for Xbox, we're giving you the first hands-on opportunity to play Sega's *Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller* before it even hits stores! You can even have your friends join in on the fun with our exclusive peek at the multiplayer mayhem of *Hunter: The Reckoning*. How about a little pre-season warm-up with Activision's *Street Hoops*? It's all here, baby, so what are you doing reading this? Pop that disc into your Xbox and start playing!

Interfacing

GIANT WALL OF VIDEO: If Xbox had its own TV show on some low rent cable network, this is pretty much exactly what it would look like – except the hosts would be better looking.

SCROLLABLE MENU SYSTEM: Designed by monkeys, for monkeys. It's simple is as simple does. You move the cursor up or down to select the delightful treat you wish to enjoy next. Voila!

BOTTOM FILLERS: Like the bits on the bottom of each paqe in this magazine, these are here to give you more information on what you are watching.

3D – IT'S LIKE, THE FUTURE, MAN: Not to be outdone by million-dollar development houses, we made our disc with not one, not two, but three Ds. Press the white and black buttons to zoom around like a little floating 3D spy.



Ad Index
August '02

The Advertiser Index is provided as a service to our readers, and as such, Imagine Media, Inc., will not be responsible for any typographical errors found within it.

ON THE DISC

NEW GAME DEMOS!

■ *Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller* – SEGA — CHALLENGE

Cruise the streets of Sin City in style with Sega's latest installment in the surreal, hyper cab action series, *Crazy Taxi*. Pound the pavement as any of the four new cabbies and rack up as many fares as possible within the three-minute time limit to see if you've got what it takes to survive to cab it another day.

■ *Hunter: The Reckoning* – Interplay — CHALLENGE

If you've been wondering what all the fuss is about multiplayer survival horror title, *Hunter: The Reckoning*, is – look no further than our exclusive demo. Plug in up to four controllers and hunt down monsters and zombies on the first three stages of the game. Get slayin'!

NOTE: You need the full game to complete the Challenge.

■ *Outlaw Golf* – Simon & Schuster — CHALLENGE

Read up on our review of *Outlaw Golf* on page 81, then try the game out for yourself as either the curvy Summer or the hip-hop wannabe Ice Trey in a one-player or two-player bout to see who can master the green!

■ *Street Hoops* – Activision

Thinking we don't provide enough entertainment for you and your friends on our disc? Well, think again and check out Activision's bid to take basketball back to the streets. Play against the CPU or have three friends join up for a match – just don't spend the whole game arguing about the score.

■ *Dead or Alive 3: Bonus Pack* – Tecmo — CHALLENGE

It's back again for any of you out there who've missed the earlier offering on our Game Disc. If you have a full version of *DOA3*, simply make sure that you have save data on your hard drive, then load up the Bonus Pack and choose to download the new features to your hard drive. Then voila! The next time you load up your full copy of *DOA3*, you'll be able to check out all the new costumes and the new CG opening movie for yourself!

FEATURES!

■ *Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon*

Take a look at the martial arts beat-'em-up with your own eyes with this exclusive trailer.

■ *Developer Commentary: Halo Pt. 3*

Listen in as *Halo's* Audio Lead and Original Music Composer Marty O'Donnell, and Cinematics Director Joseph Staten, give you the lowdown on how they helped to shape Xbox's killer app. Humor and goofiness alert.

■ *First Look: Quantum Redshift*

Not getting enough of a sneak peek at Microsoft's upcoming futuristic racer from our billboard trailers? Then see a full video of the game in motion by clicking on this link.

■ *Making of Hunter: The Reckoning*

Get an eye and earful of how Xbox's premier multiplayer hack 'n' slash came to be with exclusive interviews with the team behind the game, *Hunter: The Reckoning*. And play the demo after checking out this behind the scenes stuff.

■ *Top 10 Plays of the Month*

Our monthly ode to those special gaming moments that can't be conveyed through speech – only video. Check out the plays that have to be seen to be believed.

■ *Halo: P.O.D. (a.k.a. Pyramid of Destruction)*

Another fine moment of mayhem and chaos brought to you by the **Official Xbox Magazine** and *Halo*. Need we say more?

VIDEO VERDICTS

Our newest feature on the Game Disc is our quasi-interactive archive of video reviews all compiled on our disc for your viewing and value-tastic pleasure. This month, we kick off the section with five of the top games on Xbox: *RalliSport Challenge, JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future, Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2, Max Payne*, and *Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex*.

■ **VIDEOGAME MADNESS:** Nothing is "crazier" than game names. To wit: *Crazy Taxi, Mad Dash, Crazy Kong, Crazy Cop, Plane Crazy, Whacked!, Mad Dog McCree, Twisted Metal, Freaky Flyers, Marble Madness, Dr. Mad, Crazy Climber*... and that's just the beginning.

10 Ridiculously *Tough Questions*

Two months ago we grilled Cliff Bleszinski (also known as Cliffy B) about his life and the upcoming Xbox game *Unreal Championship*. The only problem was that while Cliffy B is hard at work on other *Unreal* projects, *Unreal Championship* is being developed by the guys at Digital Extremes... who'd like to get a word in edgewise about their own title. We caught up with the development house's own founder and creative director James Schmalz.



1) Why does Cliffy B keep taking the credit for everything *Unreal*?

Because he's a punk. He has been stalking me for years. I even had to get a restraining order because he was picking through my trash trying to find new game ideas and rifling through my closet stealing my pimp suits.



You really ought to keep your pimp suits in a safe.

2) What is Digital Extremes doing to ensure that *Unreal Championship* kicks ultimate ass?

We're pumping it full of graphically gorgeous, gib-flying goodness... ultimate kick-ass time guaranteed.



True, but you forgot to mention the best part, Xbox Live online gameplay....

3) What graphic features are you keen to abuse on the Xbox?

We have always loved cutting-edge graphics, and having that 64 megs of memory along with texture compression gives us a lot of room to explore visuals that have never been seen on a console before. And even though it's not part of the question, I'm also pretty pumped about all the sweet-ass online features coming soon.



Is it just us, or is there a lot of "pumping" and a lot of "ass" going on in this interview?

4) Explain to us why YOU are truly *Unreal*'s daddy.

That bad boy was birthed by a really great development team who put a lot of blood, sweat, and tears into it. However, I did have the (un)fortunate honor of starting the project and working on it the longest.



5) What things did *Halo* do that made you cry with shame?

The amount of art and other game content required for a game of that size is staggering. The *Halo* team did a tremendous job of putting it all together while keeping the quality top-notch all the way through the game.



Something to aim for then, right?

6) What things did *Halo* do that made you snort derisively?

The multiplayer, but I didn't make a derisive snort, only a minor grunt. But then again, that was not the focus of the game.



Hey, we love Halo multiplayer... but you're right, this game begs to be played online...

7) What are you guys doing on Xbox after *Unreal Championship*?

Come on, will there really be a need for anything after *Unreal Championship*?



Yes... In the future, we will need food, water, hovertoilets, and more Xbox games.

8) What rival game do you find yourselves playing?

We actually don't really have a rival on the Xbox as far as first-person arena-combat games go. Although not a rival, *SSX Tricky* is sweetly addictive.



Mmmmm.... sweet, sweet videogame crack.

9) Who is the stupidest guy in the video games industry, and why?

Yer momma.



Hey, we make the momma jokes around here.

10) Who is the smartest guy in the industry, and why?

The person who scores the highest in the 10 Ridiculously Tough Questions.



We appreciate the kissing up, but it's too little, too late.

Final Grade: 67/100

67% D+ *For those keeping track, that's two points better than Cliffy B.*

Ridiculously Tough Hall of Fame

Lorne Lanning	71%
Peter Molyneux	70%
Takayoshi Sato	74%
Bill Gates	67%
Steve Race	62%
Max Payne	70%
Pat Ohura	77%
Cliffy B.	65%
Warren Spector	68%
James Schmalz	67%

We wonder if our students are failing us, or if we are failing them?

Next month

Future Guy Letter Man

This month, or next month as the case may be, our happy columnist answers your letters in the future – *exactly one month in the future.*



Dear Future Guy,
Will my car hover in the future... and what's the big news in next month's issue?
– Timmy, San Diego, CA

Good question, Timmy. Although cars do not yet hover in my time, the following things do hover, thanks to modern technology: bicycles, flowerpots, hamsters, Wonderbras, and Enrique Iglesias. (Sadly, we do not yet have hovertoilets.) As to your second question, check out the coolness of **Xbox Live** And we talk about a little game we like to call **THE SEQUEL TO HALO**.

Help me, Future Guy:
Recently my voice started cracking and I'm growing hair in places that I never had hair before. Am I going to die? Also, what previews are coming next month?
– Billy, Cedar Rapids, IA

Uninvited hair? Cracking voice? Unfortunately, Billy, you're already a goner. But on a brighter note, we've got some great previews next month including **Mortal Kombat, Ninja Gaiden**, and **Dave Mirra BMX XXX** (or *Dave Mirra BMX GGG*, after Sen. Leiberman gets his hands on it.)

Future Idiot,
Why do you always mistakenly say that Morrowind *will be reviewed in the next issue? And can you accurately predict what reviews are coming next month?*
– Wendy, Syracuse, NY

Look, Wendy, I live in the future and have your next issue in my hands already, so I do *not* make mistakes. What happened was, the pages for the *Morrowind* review were printed on invisopaper that can only be read by bionic eyes. In your time, that means only Lee Majors can read it. Due to the whining of past-dwellers, we put it on old-fashioned paper this month. Next month, look for non-invisopaper reviews of **Buffy, Legends of Wrestling**, and more (including *Morrowind 5: Dark Dungeons of the Crystal Heart*, for Mr. Majors exclusively).

Demo Disc

FG, I'm trying to combine monkey DNA with the DNA of flying fish to create an army, navy, and air force of monkeyfish to do my bidding. Will I succeed? And, what's on the disc?
-Dr. Chad, Evil Mayo Clinic

Exalted Emperor Chad, I think you'll be pleased with the results of your experiments *and* the disc, which has **GT 2002**, other cool demos, and movies that will make your imperial jaw drop.

■ **ALL HAIL EXALTED EMPEROR CHAD:** We'd like to remind our future beloved despot that as a magazine with a huge readership, we would be of more use spreading Emperor Chad propaganda than serving in the monkeyfish spawning labs.